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THE

**Book of the Fathers;**

CONTAINING

THE LIVES

OF CELEBRATED

**Fathers of the Christian Church,**

AND THE

SPIRIT OF THEIR WRITINGS

"It is the peculiar property of the Fathers to give, every now and then, compendiums of religious truth, at once the briefest and most luminous . . . . When they treat of piety itself, of the substantial life of the inner man, they rise above all, except the sacred writers."

ALEXANDER KNOX

LONDON:  
JOHN W. PARKER, WEST STRAND

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JOHN W. PAPER, 83, MARTIN LANE

## P R E F A C E.

THE following pages aspire not to the character of learning, and disclaim that of theological discussion; their object is to give the general reader a concise idea of the characteristic excellences of the eminent Christians whose lives they relate, and whose writings, in the present day, are accessible to few, except the scholar or the divine. The rich mines whence the gems of deep thought and pious feeling, which will be found in the Selections, are extracted, have been explored chiefly in the libraries of Geneva and Lausanne; noble repositories of biblical and ecclesiastical literature; of the most valuable productions of the Protestant Churches, as well as of those of the most enlightened members of the Church of Rome. Among the latter, it would be alike ungrateful and unjust in the Author, not to particularize the *Bibliothèque choisie des Pères de L'Eglise Grecque et Latine*, by the Abbé Guillon, a splendid monument of the learned labour of thirty years, in the studies connected with his sacred calling; the spirited touches of Villemain have also occasionally lent their animation to the theme; and two or three passages from Gregory Nazianzen have been borrowed from the elegant translations of Mr. Boyd.

It has been justly observed that a history of the Fathers of the Church, even considered merely as a picture of society in their day, would be a truly valuable addition to our literature. Cave, in his *Ecclesiastici*, says, speaking of Athanasius, "He gives us a clear and distinct account of the most material transactions of his age, and for which alone, we can never pay a sufficient tribute of thankfulness to his memory, who otherwise had been left miserably in the dark: there being in his writings far more, and far better, accounts of the state of those times, than in all other writers put together: indeed, we find little in others but what is borrowed from him, and what commonly fares worse by falling into other hands."

Should the present attempt be received as an acceptable addition to the Christian literature of the day, the utmost ambition of the Author will be satisfied,—nor is a higher reward desired for it, than that those who may peruse the brief memorials it affords, of men powerful in their integrity, and "wise unto salvation," may derive as much pleasure in the contemplation of their virtues, as the recording of them has given to one, who, accustomed, even from childhood, to the delights of literature, has never been more sensible of their value, than when thus gathering them from the purest sources of religion and morality.

E. S.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE fourth century has been justly styled the grandest epoch of the Church, the golden age. Christian literature. The three preceding ages exhibited to the astonished world one continued and noble struggle of faith against oppression,—a faith that enabled its professors to seal its sincerity with their blood, unappalled by the prospect of the most cruel death, and maintaining a heavenly serenity of mind, an unconquerable elevation of soul, in the midst of every description of worldly suffering. Vanquished by such astounding testimonies to the truth which they had so blindly opposed, with all the force of their temporal power, the “great ones of the earth,” who had vainly persecuted, ended by adopting it. The sacred doctrines that had often been preached in caves and catacombs, to avoid the rage of pagan fury, now, safe under the protection of the purple, began to be set forth in the presence of converted emperors, who strove, by lavishing their treasures on the holy altars, to make atonement for the blood of the innocent, with which they had too often caused them to be deluged.

The season of apparent tranquillity, however, is



not always that of real security. The Church, relieved from outward persecutions, began to be agitated by inward dissensions; and Christians, who had fled to the deserts to worship God unmolested, heard, with grief and consternation, the voice of schism resounding from the cities they had left, even to the solitary echoes of their retreats; substituting arguments for good works, and the pride of verbal dexterity in place of mutual charity and fraternal love. It was then that a new host of champions arose, and that the truths of the Gospel, and the precepts of Christian morality, were set forth in the sublimest strains of eloquence, by men whose talents were yet secondary to their virtues, whose lives were the daily illustration of the duties and graces inculcated in their works. Thus it was that the glorious martyrs, Ignatius, Justin, Cyprian, Apollonius, and thousands of others as firm and as true, of the three first centuries of Christianity, were replaced by the distinguished divines, Athanasius, Gregory, Basil, Ambrose, Jean Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustin, and other gifted orators and writers of the fourth.

It is from the writings of these men, affectionately and justly styled the "Fathers of the Church," that treasures of thought, of morality, of doctrine, and of historical facts, have been drawn by succeeding ages. If they have become objects of less study, of less frequent reference in the present day, it is not that their real merits have been in any way eclipsed by those of their successors; but that solid readers are

now as rarely to be found as profound thinkers; the overwhelming quantity of light ephemeral literature which is continually occupying public attention, and the incessant round of worldly engagements, whether of pleasure or business, leave little time for inquiry into serious subjects, or the exercises of meditation and devout thought.

There are, moreover, various other causes why the works, and even the names, of the "Early Fathers," are almost unknown, at present, to many Christians, who would yet, were they acquainted with them, be deeply impressed with the fervency of their spirit, and their solemn searchings into the human heart. In later times all the abstract points of doctrine which the first Christian preachers and writers were called upon to advocate or to repress, and which drew forth so large a proportion of their eloquence and reasoning, have been made the subject of distinct treatises, and the groundwork of distinct sects, to the respective opinions of which, the wisdom or policy of most modern governments has allowed free exercise.

The progress of general cultivation of mind, joined to the increased facility of intercourse, which, at the present time, brings all nations, however distant in their relative degrees of separation, together, as one large family, has likewise served to diffuse and familiarize the sacred truths throughout the globe; and, perhaps,—such is the perversity of the human mind,—to make them, on that very account, less eagerly

sought after, because more easily attainable. Then again, what difference must there not be between those eloquent, those soul-converting discourses being read, at casual moments, through the medium of translation, and that too not only from one language into another, but sometimes through two or three languages, each inferior to the other, and all to the original ! What an immeasurable difference between receiving their truths through such colourless and insipid mediums, and listening to them from the lips of the speakers themselves, touched with fire from heaven, their voices resounding through the consecrated walls, and reaching alike the hearts of idolaters and Christians, of the torrid and the frigid zone, the Persian and the Scythian, who came, with equal ardour, from their distant homes, to ascertain the nature of the light that, dawning first in Bethlehem, had so rapidly illumined the remotest corners of the earth with its purifying beams !

When we separate also these elaborate orations from the momentous times in which they were delivered, how inanimate, how dead, must they comparatively appear ! The gigantic stature, indeed, the noble contour, remain, but where is the spirit that gave them life ; the motion that lent them grace ; the noble incidents with which they were connected ! When we see, in imagination, Athanasius cheering his people by his discourses, whilst his church was surrounded by armed troops ; Ephraim, himself an orator that penetrated all hearts, coming from the

wilds of Syria to listen to the instructions of Basil, justly styled "the Great," the most powerful advocate of the poor that ever opened his lips in their behalf; Ambrose, nobly refusing to celebrate the communion in presence of the Emperor Theodosius, stained with the blood of his massacred subjects, and a thousand other instances equally spirit-stirring, and of almost daily occurrence in the eventful histories of those men; it is then that we may form some idea of the wonderful effect of their eloquence, and the rapid spread of their doctrines.

To Protestant readers, however, another cause, and that perhaps the most powerful of all, exists, inimical to the due appreciation of these eminent teachers, and that is, the corruptions introduced into the Roman Catholic Church in later ages, on the pretended basis of their authority;—the legends and miracles interpolated with the narratives of their lives and deaths, and the perversion or exaggeration of their opinions on points of church government and discipline;—to most of which the majority of Christians, in the present day, attach perhaps too little influence, as the remaining portion may do too much. These and any other blemishes, defects, or exuberances, may however be separated from the excellencies with which they are intermixed, as easily as chaff from the wheat, and when this is done, what a pure and life-supporting nourishment remains! what precious examples of piety, humility,

devotedness to God, and perpetual sense of living in his presence ! what sublime conceptions of the nature and destiny of man ! Yet what lowliness of individual appreciation, what piercing self-scrutiny, what vigilant watchings over all the weaknesses and disorders to which human nature is liable ! what entire conviction that the life of man, from the first moment of his existence, is an eternal debt of gratitude to his Creator, for the gift of an immortal soul, capable of being restored, by his grace, to its original destination of felicity, unspeakable, endless, and secure !

In the present state of society all our habits tend to fritter away the short portion of time allotted us here, as a preparation for eternity. The turmoil of politics, the anxieties of commerce, the cares attendant upon procuring the means of subsistence, cares increased tenfold by the expensive habits of all classes, travelling abroad, and visiting at home, unprofitable reading, useless accomplishments, avarice, ambition, vanity, and pleasure, waste the energies of the mind, and dry up the affections of the heart ; until at last, when characters of sublime virtue are offered to our contemplation, we forget that they had once an existence in all respects similar to our own, liable, by the same nature, to the same infirmities ; and, regarding them solely as imaginary models of excellence, we content ourselves with admiring, instead of endeavouring to imitate them.

There are moments, however, in the existence of every rational and responsible being, when the mind finds leisure for reflection, and is in a state to profit by serious thought. In such moments it is that a volume of unpretending size may be taken up, and awaken a wish for more extended inquiry into the subject on which it may treat. This is the most favourable point of view in which brief notices and short extracts can be considered, and it is that in which it is requested the following pages may be regarded. The traveller who is hastily passing over those classic regions, where the cities that once formed the proudest ornaments of their soil now lie buried beneath it, is satisfied if he find a few relics of antiquity on its surface; but he who possesses more leisure, or a deeper spirit of investigation, is roused by them to penetrate the depths whence they have been extracted. There he beholds, not insulated fragments, but edifices noble and perfect; not mere gems, and rings, and implements, but the persons to whom they belonged. He traces their occupations, interests, and passions, and wafts back, in imagination, his existence to the date of the objects around him; hence when, in after-times, he casts his eyes upon some insulated portions of all this buried greatness, he is pleased to be reminded by them of the mighty whole which he has contemplated with reverence and admiration. It is thus, also, that we should act with respect to the authors

of antiquity. We should familiarize ourselves with the history of their times, the circumstances in which they were placed, the personages by whom they were surrounded, the events by which they were influenced, and with their own peculiar characteristics and individual habits, by which alone we shall be enabled fully to appreciate their excellencies, and understand their beauties.

# LIVES AND PRECEPTS

## FATHERS OF THE FOURTH CENTURY.

### *FATHERS OF THE GREEK CHURCH.*

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#### SAINT ATHANASIUS,

*BISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA.*

BORN, 296; DIED, 373.

“ To praise Athanasius is to praise virtue itself,” says his cotemporary and friend, Gregory of Nazianzum; and it has been generally acknowledged by posterity that the life and example, the courage and genius of this great man, were more powerful supports to the Christian Church, and contributed more to the diffusion and reception of its doctrines, than all the boasted favours of Constantine.

Yet many excellent persons in the Protestant communion have entertained a prejudice against Athanasius, on account of the Creed which bears his name, and of which the concluding damnatory clauses appear to them offensive to the spirit of Christian charity. It is somewhat singular that so large a proportion of the members of the National Church, of the rubric of which this creed forms a component



part, should never have taken the trouble to ascertain its authenticity. If they had done so, they would have learned that, although the noble sentiments set forth in the commencement of it, contain the full profession of that Faith in the perfect Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ which it peculiarly fell to the lot of Athanasius to maintain, yet that the creed itself is now generally acknowledged to be the production of Vigilius, bishop of Thapsus; a writer of the fifth century, who, fearful of incurring persecution under the Vandal Huneric by publishing his works in his own name, was in the habit of sending them into the world under the names of the most celebrated authors who had preceded him, especially Athanasius, to whose style he paid the compliment, always doubtful, and often injurious, of endeavouring, more especially, to imitate. The same inquiries also that would have proved the spuriousness of this creed, would have rescued the character of Athanasius from the imputation of harshness and intolerance with which it has been almost necessarily associated in the minds of those who know nothing of him but from this production. How opposite to any such defects is the portrait drawn of him by a writer who has selected all its features as depicted by his cotemporaries, who had studied them from life.

“Athanasius was the greatest man of his age; and perhaps, taking him altogether, the Church never had a greater. He was endowed by God, who appointed him to combat the most fatal of all

heresies, with every gift of nature and of grace which could fit him for his lofty destination. His mode of thinking was just, lively, and penetrating,—his disposition generous and disinterested, his courage always collected; his heroism not sudden or impetuous, but uniformly equal and consistent. His faith was lively, his charity boundless, his humility profound; his Christianity manly, simple, noble, as that of the Evangelists; his eloquence was natural, and yet enlivened with flashes of brilliance; powerful in facts, and going at once up to the point in view, with a precision rarely to be found in the Greeks of that period. The austerity of his life claimed respect for his virtues: the mildness of his deportment gained him the love of all with whom he was called on to associate. The calmness and serenity of his soul were depicted in his countenance; and though his figure was not imposing, there was nevertheless a striking air of majesty in his exterior. He was not ignorant of profane learning, but he avoided making any parade of it: versed in the letter of the Sacred Writings, he was likewise saturated with the spirit of them.

Never did Greek or Roman love his country as Athanasius loved the Church. His long experience had thoroughly initiated him in ecclesiastical affairs. Adversity, which always strengthens the genius it does not crush, had given him an admirable sagacity for finding out resources in cases when, to every one else, all human means appeared to fail.

Threatened with exile as soon as he was seated in his episcopacy, and with death as soon as he went into exile, he struggled nearly fifty years against a party, subtle in argument, and profound in intrigue; unprincipled courtiers, masters of their prince, arbiters of favour and disgrace, indefatigable in their calumnies, and barbarous in their persecutions: all of them he disconcerted and confounded, and invariably escaped their snares, without ever affording them the pleasure of seeing him make a single false step. Even whilst he fled before them he made them tremble in the distance, and, concealed for months in the tomb of his father, he still caused his voice to resound in the crowded haunts of men. No one knew so well as himself, the precise moment when to appear or to retreat—to speak or to remain silent—to act or to keep quiet. He could always fix the inconstancy of the people; whatever might be the place of his exile, he could always find in it a new country, and he exercised the same influence at Treves, in the remotest part of France, as in Egypt, or even in the heart of Alexandria itself. He encouraged the timid, united the faithful to each other, by means of his extensive correspondence among them, and never converted a feeble friend into an enemy, by harshness: on the contrary he excused the weaknesses of all, with a charity and tenderness which showed that in condemning so entirely as he did, all constraint and rigour in matters of religion, he was less actuated by any considerations of personal interest

or safety, than by his natural character and principles."

Such is the portraiture of Athanasius drawn by a contemporary, which no one who has spoken of him without prejudice has ever accused of being overcharged, and it only remains to us to prove its fidelity by comparing it with the principal incidents of his life.

Athanasius was born at Alexandria in 296. The place of his birth was at once the mart of commerce, the resort of science, and the haunt of pleasure: it was frequented by all the navigators of Europe and Asia, and might be deemed, by its magnificent structures, the fame of its schools, and its vast library, the Athens of the East. But, whilst it exceeded that classic city in population, wealth, and even vain disputes, and eagerness to "hear any new thing," it fell very far short of it in refinement of imagination, and taste in the arts: it was rather a Babel of profane learning, where Christianity had to struggle against the ancient religion of the country, the Greek polytheism, the Roman worship, and the Oriental philosophy; all jarring materials, yet all mixed up and confounded together in indiscriminate liberty and licence. Its inhabitants were as renowned for their inquiring minds as for their industrious habits: under the very walls of the observatory founded by the Ptolemies, of the immense library, then daily adding to its treasures, the loss of which posterity has not yet ceased to deplore, were workshops, and

warehouses of every description. Some were weaving linen, some making paper; others blowing glass, or forging metals—even the blind worked: none were idle but the philosophers by profession. Amid such crowds of natives, strangers, and travellers, there was no sect or opinion, no singularity of manner, habit, or doctrine, that did not claim indulgence: there Christianity had never had to contend with persecution, for the Roman governors themselves trembled, when they looked upon the dense and bold population of a city at once so studious and so agitated.

Such were the characteristics of the place destined by Providence for the chief scene of the exertions of Athanasius. From his earliest years he manifested such amiable dispositions as attracted the notice, and gained him the affection of Alexander, the excellent bishop of Alexandria, who attached him, whilst he was yet a youth, to his personal service. He was already invested with the office of deacon, when the Council of Nice was convened, at the command of Constantine the Great, to inquire into the errors of the Arian heresy. To give the history of this heresy would be to give the history of an error, to call it by its mildest name, which first broke asunder the bonds of love that had before held the Christians together, in such fraternal unity as drew forth expressions of wonder and admiration even from the Pagans themselves,—an error which weakened the faith, and damped the hopes of thou-

sands who had before been supported throughout the severest trials, by their confidence in the God who had assumed the nature of humanity, that through Him its weaknesses might be made strong, and its infirmities healed,—an error which taught man to place an impious confidence in his own reasoning powers, in opposition to the-revealed wisdom of his Maker, and which finally spread throughout the world a spirit of self-sufficiency, presumptuous discussion, heartless levity, and every other feeling decidedly in opposition to the humble, grateful, reverential, adoring spirit, that ought to distinguish Christians on earth, as it does the angels in heaven.

Artēmas was the first person, calling himself a Christian, who presumed to throw doubts upon the nature and attributes of the Divine Founder of the faith he pretended to profess. His opinions were taken up by Paul of Samozate; but a council being assembled at Antioch to remonstrate with him upon the blasphemous nature and injurious tendency of his doctrines, he had the grace to blush at the thought of vindicating them in the presence of so many venerable servants of the Lord, and relinquished them for that time. Shortly afterwards, however, he resumed them with increased arrogance; and openly refusing, at a second council, to acknowledge the divinity of the Saviour, he was cast out of the communion of the Church.

At this time the opinions of Paul of Samozate

found but few partisans; it was for Arius that the sorrowful privilege was reserved of reproducing them, and transmitting them from age to age, under the sanction of his name, and in the endeavour to destroy the foundation of Christianity itself, along with all the consolatory hopes and ennobling anticipations connected with it.

Arius was gifted with a prepossessing exterior, plausible manners, and a sufficient fund of learning to dazzle others, though not enough to correctly guide himself. With these advantages, joined to an activity worthy of a better cause, he soon made a number of proselytes; for human vanity is always flattered by the idea of seeing things in a light different from that in which they may be viewed by others. Alexander, the bishop of Alexandria, with true Christian gentleness, long laboured to convince Arius of his errors, by the mildest arguments in personal conference; he then called in others of his clergy to make the same representations, and finally, caused public conferences to be held, in which he entreated him to be guided, as the Christians of the earliest and purest times had ever been, by the words of the Sacred Scriptures, on this, the most solemn of all subjects. Arius, however, more bent on public fame than on public peace, persisted in the promulgation of his opinions, and resisting equally the arguments of an Episcopal Council expressly convened for the purpose, at which nearly a hundred bishops attended, he was finally cast out of the communion,

as a person inimical to the truth of the Church, and the harmony of its members.

From this period Arius set no bounds to his enmity against the orthodox Christians, and the manner in which he persecuted them too plainly showed in what spirit his doctrines were conceived. He traversed Palestine and the surrounding countries to diffuse them in person. Having gained over Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia, to his side, a man allied to the imperial family, and addicted to all the luxurious habits of the court, he speedily circulated the poison of infidelity at the banquets of the rich and profligate; and, as the examples of the great never fail ultimately to be imitated in all inferior classes, the Christian world became, even at a moment of temporal peace under the benign protection of Constantine the Great, a scene of confusion and contest, more afflicting to the truly pious than the direct persecutions to which they had been exposed by the fury of their Pagan enemies. Not only in Palestine and Egypt, but throughout the whole of the East, nothing but irreverend disputes upon the most sacred topics were heard: it was not merely the ecclesiastics that took part in them, but even the most unenlightened,—people sitting in the market-place with their wares, shopkeepers behind their counters, sempstresses, tailors, all made the mysteries into which not even angels presume to look, the theme of their ignorant conjectures, and often of their profane jesting. Well has the wisest



of men said "The beginning of strife is as the letting out of water:" thus the petty stream which had its source in the vanity and presumption of an individual, swelled, as it proceeded, into a torrent that tore up and overwhelmed everything in its course. Perhaps as serious an evil to after-ages as any connected with the Arian heresy, was, the occasion it afforded to temporal powers of interfering in matters purely spiritual, which it had always before been the peculiar characteristic of the Christian religion to confine entirely within the jurisdiction of the Church; which, in return, sought no dominion over earthly things.

The Emperor Constantine, greatly moved at the dissensions which thus divided the Christian world, after trying in vain to reconcile them by letters written with his own hand, in the very spirit of the peace-makers, yielded to the advice of the venerable Osius, Bishop of Cordova, and convened a general council of the heads of the Church, to decide upon such articles of the Christian faith, as might be essentially necessary to salvation, as set forth on the authority of the Scriptures themselves.

This council was convened at Nice, on the 19th of June, in the year 325. It was a solemn and affecting sight to see men distinguished for their piety, their learning, their virtues, pouring in from all parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa, to attest the honour of their Divine Master—most of them venerable from their years—many exciting the strongest

compassion from the maimed and suffering state of their bodies, mutilated under the persecutions of preceding reigns, as in the persons of the bishops Paphnutius (a man of singular purity of manners, brought up in a monastery from his childhood,) and Potamon, who had each had their right eye forced out, and one thigh contracted, in consequence of the division of the sinew. The hands of Paul, Bishop of Neocæsarea, bore the marks of having been plunged in boiling lead; and in divers others might be seen the cruelties that monsters, bearing the name of human beings, could bring themselves to practise on their fellow-creatures, blameless in conduct, solely for refusing to abjure their opinions and perjure their conscience, by a denial of their religious faith.

Three hundred and eighteen bishops, accompanied by an immense number of priests, deacons, and other ecclesiastics, presented themselves on this occasion: the countries beyond the Nile, Upper Armenia, Persia, Scythia, the remotest parts of the north of Europe, wherever the name of Christ had been preached, all sent their representatives to give their testimony to the honour and glory of His holy name. They met in a vast hall prepared for the purpose, in the centre of which was raised a magnificent throne, whereon was laid The Book of Life, by the words of which their proceedings were to be regulated. When all had taken their places, the Emperor Constantine entered, splendidly attired in purple, adorned

with jewels, but without guards, or any attendants, except a few Christians. The assembly rose in testimony of their respect; he returned their salute with reverence, and was unwilling to seat himself in the low chair of gold, which was prepared for him at the side of the throne, until the bishops requested it; after which they also seated themselves. The emperor opened the meeting in a speech full of kindness and humility, after which he took no part in the discussion, fearing the appearance of mixing up human authority with sacred things; and many of the elders were moved even to tears at thus seeing the civil head of the empire, after three preceding centuries of hostility and persecution from the supreme power, now meekly rank itself with the humblest of the disciples of Christ, intent only upon the advancement of the spiritual interests of His kingdom, which is not of this world. Nevertheless, the intervention of regal authority in discussions purely religious, though in this instance acting only as a medium of union, was a dangerous precedent, fraught with evil consequences in future ages; opening the way to tyrannical interference on one side, and unworthy concessions on the other, and tempting the clergy, at a subsequent period, to interfere in things temporal, in proportion as the civil authorities interfered in things spiritual.

Arius had been summoned to attend this council, and was once more invited, in the tone of charity and long-suffering inseparable from true Christian

feeling, to declare his sentiments, and the reasons upon which he might have been induced to found them. He accordingly stood forth, to assert his own imaginings against the express declarations of the inspired writers, and the words of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. It is written, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Arius maintained that the Word was *not* in the beginning, and that there was a time when it was not with God, and that it was not God. It is written that, "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." Arius maintained that this Creator was himself only a creature, and consequently could not have made everything, or anything that was made. It is written that, "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Arius maintained that he was not truly God, but merely a being endowed with divine virtue. It is written that He is "The same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Arius maintained that he was subject to change and alteration. It is written that, "He is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." Arius maintained that if He remained "without spot or blemish," it was only by an effort of His free will, which might equally have caused Him, had He so willed it, to sin like any other human being. With these and similar doctrines were the ears of the holy assembly shocked, and their hearts grieved. He had scarcely concluded ere a general burst of indignation was heard, and it

seemed as if sentiments so utterly repugnant to the name and doctrines of Christianity, needed only to be promulgated to the world, to inspire the reprobation they deserved. Nevertheless the council was called on to refute, as well as to express their abhorrence of them, and it was on this occasion that Athanasius first publicly exhibited the extraordinary faculties which, for the whole remainder of his life, were almost entirely devoted to the sacred cause of vindicating the divinity of Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Saviour, as "God manifest in the flesh." The doctrine which he set forth, with the eloquence of one whose lips were touched with the fire of the Holy Spirit, and in which he was supported by all the most gifted of the Church, was finally resolved by the council into the following creed, or profession of faith: "We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things, visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God; begotten of the Father, from his own essence; God of God, light of light, very God of very God; begotten, not made; being one with the Father; by whom all things have been made in the heavens and upon the earth; who, for the love of us, and for our salvation, descended from the heavens; became incarnate, and made himself man; who suffered, and who came to life again the third day; who has arisen to heaven, and will come to judge the living and the dead. And we believe in the Holy Spirit."

Such is the concise expression of their faith, as set

forth in the Holy Scriptures, to which the ecclesiastics of this numerous meeting bounded its object. No attempt can be traced herein to extend the power of the Church in temporal matters, to obtain undue influence over its members, or to fetter the conscience, or restrain the mind, by multiplying directions, and laying down rules, on matters of comparatively trifling import. Admirable in its simplicity, pure in doctrine and strong in truth, it was signed on the spot, with an union of heart and mind which might be deemed the immediate gift of the Holy Spirit, by all the bishops present; with the exception of seventeen, who remained firm enough to the doctrines of Arius to withstand all the arguments drawn from the Scriptures against them: but afterwards, fearing the displeasure of the emperor, they opened the eyes of their understanding wide enough to see which way their temporal interests lay, though they had kept them shut as to the interests of the life eternal; and they all finally signed, with the exception of two only, whose contumacy, considering all the circumstances, perhaps did more honour to their sincerity than the vacillation of the others did to their piety.

Notwithstanding the severity with which Athanasius treated the principles of the Arians, his charity and liberality of disposition so entirely separated those principles from their persons, that it was with grief he saw the excesses into which the zeal of the Emperor Constantine hurried him against them;

even so far as (not contented with banishing Arius and the two bishops who adhered to him into Illyria,) to condemn the works of Arius to be burnt, and to publish an edict declaring that any one who should be found guilty of concealing, for the purpose of preserving them, should be punished with death. Athanasius had likewise the foresight to regard this conduct as affording a fatal precedent, which, though at that time it had at any rate the excuse of being employed in the cause of truth, might, at a future period, be equally resorted to, as a support in the cause of error. How far his views were founded upon a knowledge of human nature, the ecclesiastical history of succeeding ages has but too fully verified.

The year after the convocation of the Council of Nice, Alexander, the Bishop of Alexandria, finding that hour drawing near which promised him the reward of his earthly labours, and continuing them to the latest moment for the good of his church, testified his desire that Athanasius should be his successor, without hiding from him the dangers, the inquietudes, and turmoils of the charge. He died, and left behind him a reputation which no contrariety of opinion in speculative matters has ever sought to tarnish. "Alexander was not called upon to shed his blood in the profession of his faith," says Athanasius, in a letter to the bishops of Egypt and Libya, "but the ardour he constantly displayed in combating against the enemies of the truth, and the

persecutions he had to contend with in his own person, even in his extreme old age, render him deserving of all our respect, equally with that which we owe to the holy confessors who have gained the crown of martyrdom by their steadfastness."

Nevertheless, Athanasius shrank from the idea of entering on the path of his pious predecessor; not from any want of zeal or courage in his cause, but from an humble distrust of his own fitness to discharge its duties with the ability it required. The unanimous suffrages of the people, however, confirmed the nomination that Alexander had made on his death-bed: still Athanasius distrusted himself: it seemed as if, in proportion as he was sensible of the brightness of the light with which the sacred office was invested, his perceptions became involved in darkness, when he turned to contemplate his own acquirements for it. Not daring to venture on the assumption of it, he took refuge in flight, and buried himself in the deserts beyond the Nile: he was not, however, permitted to remain long in this seclusion; his retreat was discovered, and he was finally obliged to yield to the wishes of a church, whose desire for his guidance seemed only increased by the difficulty his humility opposed to obtaining it.

In an appeal so general and so solemn Athanasius could not but read the commands of "the Master," as the early Christians affectionately and affectingly styled their Divine example. He was accordingly consecrated Bishop of Alexandria on the



27th of December, 326; and some years afterwards we find him, by one of those singular coincidences which are perpetually occurring in human destiny, addressing a most eloquent epistle to Dracontius, a young solitary of eminent piety, precisely on the same subject of endeavouring to avoid the offices of the episcopacy by flight.

“I know not,” says he, “in what terms to write to you. Must I reproach you with refusing the episcopacy on account of your being afraid of the circumstances in which we are placed, and of concealing yourself through fear of the Jews? Whatever may be your motive, I cannot approve of it. Many of our brethren are scandalized by your retreat: not so much by your refusal in itself, as considering the circumstances under which it is made, and the dangers to which you expose the Church by it. The singular unanimity that marked your election must necessarily be disturbed by your desertion: parties will start up again—cabal and faction will dispute your seat, and it will be carried away, not by men worthy of possessing it, but by such as you too well know. Into what bitterness of regret you plunge me! what lively and profound affliction has succeeded to my sweetest hopes! You ought to be a consolation to all of us: instead of that, I can only see you taken from us into the presence of the severe Judge, who will demand of you the account which your conscience will not be less severe in accusing you of. Before you were ordained, you had

a right to dispose of yourself, but after that you were no longer at liberty to do so. You belonged to your people, and to you it is that they have a right to look up for the bread of life, for instruction in the Sacred Word. If you leave them to perish for want of food, solely that you may take care of yourself, how will you have to answer to Jesus Christ, when he shall ask you if you have fed his sheep? You shrink from the difficulties with which we are surrounded—where is your courage? It is the Lord that you are called upon to serve, and not the times. Do you imagine, then, that the episcopal ministers will be without their reward? If all the world had thought as you do, how would you yourself have become a Christian, having no bishop to instruct you? And if, in the course of time, the example you are now setting should come to be universally followed, what would become of our churches? St. Paul was right in saying, ‘I am not worthy to be called an apostle,’ but he says also, ‘Woe is me if I preach not the gospel.’ And to this conviction of his duty it is that we are indebted for those apostolic labours so glorious for himself and for the whole Church—those distant journeys into Illyria, to Rome, and into Spain. The more he had to combat with, the more he felt sure of his recompense. Which would you wish to resemble, my dear Dracontius—St. Paul, or those who have nothing in common with him?

“Do not imagine that you are irrevocably bound

by any declaration you may have made,—even by any oath you may have taken,—no more to show yourself from the moment that you were ordained? Moses and Jeremiah, after having received the gift of prophecy, were permitted to remain silent: the fear of the Lord, nevertheless, prevailed with them, and they exercised their holy ministry to the end. You know the history of Jonah; he fled, but was recalled by the voice of the Lord, and prophesied. The Lord knows us better than we can possibly know ourselves. He knows who those are to whom he confides his churches. He who does not consider himself worthy, ought to think less of his past conduct than of the ministry to which he may be called; if he do not wish to add to the faults of which he may already have to accuse himself, the still greater one of not being willing to repair them. You allege to me your weakness in excuse for your flight; I am willing to believe that you feel it; but is it better, therefore, by that flight, to expose the Church to become the prey of its enemies? \* \* \*

“Do not believe those who would persuade you that the episcopal life may open to you temptations to sin; you may be a bishop and still allow yourself to feel both hunger and thirst, as St. Paul did. We know bishops who mortify the flesh, and hermits who are worldly-minded; bishops who can work miracles, and hermits who cannot. The crown is not given to the place we may inhabit, but to the good works we may do.”

The labours of the bishops, at this period of the Christian Church, were indeed so multiplied, as well as so important, that to many men of humble mind and tender conscience the adequate discharge of them seemed to require a degree of wisdom as well as virtue, almost beyond the reach of humanity. "With the bishops," says an eloquent writer,—"rested all the most solemn services and ceremonies of the Church. They preached, baptized, administered the sacraments, heard confessions, ordained penitences, both public and private, excommunicated offenders, and received them again, on their due manifestation of repentance, within the pale of the Church; visited the sick and dying, buried the dead, redeemed the prisoners and captives, supported the poor, the widows, and the orphans, directed the education of youth, founded and regulated hospitals and infirmaries, administered the property of the Church, and acted as magistrates in private matters, and as arbitrators in public ones. They moreover published treatises on morality, discipline, and doctrine; entered into controversy both with the heretics and philosophers; frequently lectured on science and history; dictated letters to persons who consulted them, both pagans and Christians, on matters of religion; corresponded with the churches and bishops, the monks, and hermits; sat in councils and synods; were called to the deliberations of the emperors; often charged with negotiations and treaties, and

sent occasionally to usurpers or barbarian foes, to disarm or appease them by their eloquence. The three powers, religious, political, and philosophical, were indeed frequently represented, with equal force and ability, in the persons of the bishops."

"In calling Athanasius to the episcopacy of Alexandria," says Gregory of Nazianzum, "Providence seemed to have placed him at the head, as it were, of the Christian Church. He realized in it all that had been conceived of him before his election. If his virtue was carried to a height which it was difficult for others to reach, his affability still seemed to render it accessible to every one. Full of goodness, always master of himself, easily conciliated, persuasive in his language, he united the holy dispositions of angels to the exterior graces with which they are represented. His reproofs softened by affection, and his praises seasoned with advice, never passed the precise boundary of truth. There was neither weakness in his complaisance, nor harshness in his severity."

From the moment of his instalment, Athanasius was surrounded with personal dangers and political difficulties. The facile and variable temper of Constantine exposed that prince to all the intrigues of the Arians; their bishops, with Eusebius of Nicomedia at their head, were soon restored to their seats, and even Arius himself recalled from exile. Athanasius, however, remained firm in refusing to

admit him to the communion of his church, and the emperor being informed of it, had the weakness and injustice to write to him in the following terms:

“Instructed as you have been, as to my wishes and fixed resolution on this subject, I command you to lay open the pale of the Church to those who desire to return to it. If you do not do this, I shall give orders for your deposition and banishment.” Such were the first fruits of regal interference in matters of religious discipline. Athanasius replied, that “There could be no real communion between the evangelical church of Christ and a person who attacked the divinity of Jesus Christ himself.” The emperor, internally admiring the virtue of Athanasius, was soon ashamed of the threats he had made use of towards him; and, on Athanasius being cited shortly after to Nicomedia, to reply to some calumnious accusations against him, Constantine wrote himself to the church of Alexandria in testimony of his worth, saying—“Believe me, my brethren, those wicked people have not been able to establish anything against your bishop. I experienced a sensible joy in seeing him again, and whilst conversing with him, I could not but be conscious that I was indeed speaking to a man of God.”

It would be tedious and unprofitable to recount all the intrigues of the Arians, or Eusebians, as they have been equally styled, on account of their chief partisan Eusebius. The Church perplexed with councils, the people divided among themselves, per-

secutions and distrusts occupying the place of faith, good works, and love to each other: such were the fruits of the disquisitions they introduced.

So far did the Arians carry their endeavours to effect the ruin of Athanasius, that they even ventured to accuse him before the council of Tyre, of the death of Arsenius, a bishop, who had suddenly disappeared after having been brought over to their doctrines. In order to give strength to their accusation, they produced a withered arm, which they pretended to have found, and which they affected to have identified, as having belonged to Arsenius. At this sight a cry of indignation from the friends of Athanasius, and of triumph on the side of the Arians, arose at the same instant in the assembly. Athanasius alone was unmoved; he asked if there was any one present who had been personally acquainted with Arsenius. A number of bishops replying in the affirmative, Athanasius went out of the hall for a moment, and returned with a man covered by a large cloak, and who bent his eyes towards the earth as he walked. Athanasius requested him to lift up his head; he did so, and showed the features of Arsenius. It was indeed himself! Having heard of the intentions of the Arians to insnare Athanasius by his means, his conscience admonished him so strongly to prevent it, that he left the place where they had concealed him in the night, traversed the intervening distance to Tyre as rapidly as his utmost exertions could enable him to do, and, presenting himself before Athanasius,

confessed, with repentant tears, the plot against him. Athanasius embraced him, thanked him for his warning, and, in his turn, concealed him till the moment when he should have occasion to present him to the council. It may easily be imagined what a sensation this unexpected apparition made in the council. Athanasius then drew the cloak of Arsenius aside: "Behold," said he, "Arsenius with his two hands; God has given him no more: it is for my accusers to say where a third could be placed, or where that has come from, which they have just now exhibited to you." The rage of the Arians at thus seeing the disgrace they had prepared for Athanasius, unexpectedly recoil upon themselves, rose to such a pitch of fury, that they would have torn him to pieces, if his friends had not rescued him from their hands, and got him on board a vessel which was going to sail the following evening.

The next attempt of the enemies of Athanasius to injure him was more successful. They accused him of having retained at Alexandria the corn of Egypt destined for the supplies of Byzantium, the new capital of the empire. Constantine was so jealous on this point, that shortly before, upon only a suspicion of an offence of a similar nature, he had suffered the philosopher Sopater, though in habits of friendship with him, to be decapitated. It was in vain that Athanasius declared his innocence of the charge, and offered incontestably to prove it. His protestations were disregarded, and he was banished



to Treves; where, however, he found the greatest consolations in the intimacy he formed with Maximin the bishop, and the protection afforded him by Constantine the Younger, who governed the Gauls in the name of the emperor his father, and held his court in that city.

The succeeding year, 337, Constantine the Great died. Just before his decease he made all the amends in his power towards Athanasius, by revoking the sentence of his exile, and he was sent back to his people by Constantine the Younger with this letter to the faithful of Alexandria:

“Constantine, my lord and father, had the intention of restoring to your love this venerable interpreter of the Divine laws. Death has not permitted him to do so; it is therefore for me to execute his wishes. Athanasius will tell you of the respect with which I have treated him during the time that he has resided near me; but could I testify sufficiently my high consideration for so holy a man! May the Lord preserve him to you, my very dear brothers.”

Unfortunately for Athanasius, this worthy prince, who had shared his father's dominions with his two brothers, Constantius and Constans, was killed three years after his father's death: Constantius, in whose domain Egypt was included, was so entirely subjugated by the Arian faction, that he not only suffered Athanasius to be deposed a second time, but established Gregory of Cappadocia, by the aid of an armed force, in his place; permitting the Arians to

commit, with impunity, outrages, cruelties, and insults upon their fellow-christians, which even roused the compassion of the pagans themselves, and many of them sheltered the unfortunate Christians, who would otherwise have been dragged forth to death, by the merciless men who called themselves their brethren.

Athanasius being thus suspended from his pastoral duties, and having the grief to see all the churches in Alexandria in possession of the Arians by force of arms, placed himself under the protection of Constans at Rome. Now, indeed, it was that civil wars and contentions desolated the Church, and that even the Arians themselves found they had "sown the wind," and were condemned to "reap the tempest." The practice of religious duties was swallowed up in the discussion of religious mysteries, and the pride of human understanding left the depravity of the human heart to develop itself in action, unchecked by any fear of offending Him who had come upon the earth to renew it, and make it clean.

It was reserved for Constans to become the instrument of deliverance to Athanasius, and to reinstate him in his seat at Alexandria after an exile of seven years. It would be impossible to describe the transports of his people at seeing him restored to them after so long a separation: more than four hundred bishops wrote to him on the occasion, and, on his side, all his activity seemed redoubled, and

his talents expanded tenfold to answer the claims upon them which he found in this delightful resumption of his duties.

Too soon, however, fresh persecutions arose. Constans being killed by the usurper Magnence, the Arians, through their influence with his brother Constantius, obtained complete sway in the government, both of church and state; and the persecutions of the orthodox were carried on with a degree of barbarity which made many fly to the deserts, unable to face the dangers that threatened them. It was at this period that Athanasius wrote to Dracontius, who was one of this number, the letter we have already cited, and which had the effect of immediately bringing him back to his post. In this trying juncture Athanasius surpassed himself; supporting the weak, rallying the scattered, facing the enemy, protecting his flock like a faithful shepherd, intent only on following the glorious example of those who had preceded him in the paths of faith; but too soon the storm was to burst on his own head, and thus he has described it in the work which he entitled an *Apology for his flight* :

“It was night; the people were all assembled in the church, preparing for the festival of the next day. Suddenly it was invested by more than five hundred soldiers, under the command of Syrianus their chief, and armed with naked swords, bows, arrows, and lances. Unwilling to abandon my people in so trying a juncture, and judging it to be my duty

to expose myself the first to danger, I directed the deacon to read the psalm beginning ‘*The mercy of the Lord endureth for ever.*’ I invited the people to make the responses\*, and when it was finished I told them to go to their respective homes; but the soldiers having rushed into the temple, and making towards the sanctuary on all sides to seize me, the people and the priests conjured me to seek my safety in flight. I refused to do so till I should see that they were themselves secure from harm; then rising, and having prayed to the Lord, I entreated them to retire, assuring them that I would a thousand times rather incur the risk of the greatest danger that could threaten me, than see them exposed to the least injury on my account. When the chief part of the congregation had got out of the church, some friends came up to me, and took me away. Thus, and I call on the Supreme Truth to witness it, notwithstanding the soldiers who were watching the sanctuary, notwithstanding the troops who were surrounding the church, I went forth under the guidance of the Lord, and escaped without being known; glorifying God in that I had not abandoned my people, and that, having first put them in safety, I had been enabled afterwards to save myself, and to escape from the hands of those who were pursuing me.

“George (an Arian bishop of infamous character, sent to replace Athanasius,) arriving, however, in the

\* It may be remarked, that this was the beginning of the custom of the congregation making the responses, which now form so general and affecting a part of Christian worship.

time of Lent, from Cappadocia, to which place he had been sent for, went even beyond the instructions he had received to do mischief. After Easter week everywhere were to be seen holy virgins going to prison, venerable prelates loaded with chains, and the houses of widows and orphans pillaged. These outrages were only the prelude to others. The week after Pentecost the people assembled in the cemetery for their devotion, being unwilling to hold communion with George. He, hearing of it, stirred up Sebastian, of the sect of the Manicheans, who marched down, at the head of his soldiers, upon this pious assembly: finding only a small number of persons, the principal part having retired on account of the approach of night, he subjected those that remained to all the outrages that might be expected from him. He ordered a large fire to be lighted, close to which he placed the holy virgins, and endeavoured to extort from them a declaration that they believed in the tenets of Arius. Finding them, however, stedfast in their faith, according to the Sacred Scriptures, he ordered them to be stripped naked, and to be beaten on the face; which was accordingly done, and with such cruelty, that they were utterly disfigured, and for a long time their features could not be recognised. He treated the men, forty in number, with not less barbarity, ordering them to be scourged with branches of palm freshly gathered, and armed with all their points, which entered so deeply into the flesh, and lacerated it so cruelly, that many died in consequence, either

from the immediate suffering, or the treatment to which they were subsequently compelled to submit. Those who did not die were sent into the Upper Oasis; many expired on the road in consequence of the cruelty with which they were treated, and others in the place of their banishment." In this number were several bishops of Egypt and Libya, and among them Dracontius, the young man of whom we have before spoken.

Six years Athanasius passed, from this time, in the seclusion of the deserts on the confines of Egypt; among the islands formed by the Nile in its course, in the shadow of the mysterious monuments even then wonders of antiquity, the ruins of cities once flourishing, or the environs of those which were still the busy haunts of men; constrained thus to hide himself from the wrath of Constantius, who offered large rewards to any one who should bring him his head. "Though his exile was a matter of necessity," says Gregory of Nazianzum, "he yet knew how to turn it to profitable account. He allied himself in it to the schools of divinity and holy monasteries of Egypt, linking solitary life with religious society, showing that retirement and the discharge of the episcopal duties were not incompatible." He did, indeed, join the tranquillity of the deserts to the labours of his ministry in such harmonious union, as to convince every one around him that the real renouncement of the world consisted in the stillness of peace, and innocence of conduct, rather than in

exterior separation from it. The hermits of the Thebaid, whose piety he strengthened, and whose austerities he shared, revering him as the bulwark of the churches of the East, and a martyr in their cause, undertook to transmit to the world the writings with which he indefatigably occupied himself in defence of the faith, and the letters of consolation and advice to the scattered remnants of his flock, by which he strove to make up for his forced absence. Some of his most vigorous works emanated from his pen at this time: it was, indeed, a more powerful weapon than the sword of Constantius, and the world beheld, with amazement, a persecuted individual, from the corner of an unknown desert, balance, by his single talent, the fiat of a monarch who held the empires of the East and of the West in his sway.

It not unfrequently, however, happened that the emissaries of this prince, traversing the deserts in every direction in search of Athanasius, would fall in with some of these holy men who ministered to him: in such cases, death too often paid the price of their devotedness; for, equally incapable of falsehood or of treachery, they made no other answer to the questions put to them than by bending their heads to the stroke which hung over them. Athanasius, deeply afflicted at thus involving his friends in his misfortunes, resolved to have no further communication with the living, and buried himself still deeper in the recesses of the desert; nevertheless, he

was discovered by a hermit, who brought him from time to time his letters, and the food which he required, and at the same time took back with him the writings, which, speedily copied and circulated by many faithful hands, were destined to serve as nourishment to the souls of those who might be said to be passing through a spiritual wilderness.

Time, however, always the best friend of the unfortunate, brought about an event which changed the face of things. In the year 361 Constantius the Arian died. Julian the Apostate, a man of consummate policy, and unwearied activity, came to the throne, and paganism was restored with all its ancient splendours. Julian, however, disdained to have recourse to violence or persecution for the destruction of the religion he had once himself professed. He sought perhaps surer, because less suspected means of eradicating it—he sought to sap the integrity of its professors by flattery and promises; to destroy its sanctity by ridicule; to chill its fervour by sarcasms; and to deprive it of union and example by fomenting in its bosom the disputes of all parties, without appearing to take part, himself, in any. On the hateful but too sure principle of policy, “divide and conquer,” he recalled all the bishops who had been exiled on account of their evangelical faith, and opposed them to the Arians who had usurped their seats. Athanasius was thus a third time restored to his people. “His return,” says Gregory of Nazianzum, “was a day of festival,



not only for the inhabitants of Alexandria, but also for all the rest of Egypt. The whole province seemed to have risen in one body to meet him—the banks of the Nile were crowded with spectators, its waves furrowed with the track of a thousand barks; the eminences covered with people anxious to get the first view of him in the distance. It was quite a triumph to those who had the delight of contemplating him. An immense number walked before him, making the air resound with pious canticles, and all the city was illuminated.

“Restored to the government of his church, Athanasius displayed a wisdom beyond all praise. Far from indulging any resentments against his adversaries, he conducted himself with the utmost moderation towards them. He thought only of appeasing enmities, conciliating differences, and holding out the hand of charity, even to those who had most sought to injure him. He administered succour to the necessitous, without making any difference between those of the evangelical faith, and those who dissented from it. The Jews and Pagans were equally the objects of his charity: it was enough for him that they stood in need of it. He applied himself to the extension of the holy doctrines with all the zeal for which he had ever been remarkable; corresponding with some, entering into conferences with others, but leaving to all entire liberty, persuaded that it was the best means of bringing into the way of truth the greatest number of souls. Insomuch that

it might be said of him that, participating the nature of the loadstone, he attracted to himself those whose dispositions partook of the harshness of iron."

Qualities like these were, however, the very last that the Emperor Julian desired to find in any of the bishops, and his dislike of Athanasius's virtues, and dread of his abilities, were soon manifested in open persecution against him. "The gods are despised," he wrote to Edicius, prefect of Egypt; "send away that scoundrel Athanasius, who dares to baptize in my empire Greek females of illustrious birth." He shortly after published an edict banishing Athanasius not only from Alexandria, but from all Egypt; he accordingly prepared to return to the deserts which had before sheltered him; but no sooner had he embarked on the Nile, than he was informed that Julian had given orders for him to be followed and deprived of life: upon hearing this he ordered the boat to return with him to Alexandria. His friends conjured him not thus openly to incur the danger which threatened him: "Do you not know, then," said Athanasius, "that He who protects me is greater than he who persecutes me?" A few minutes after he had turned back, the emissaries of Julian were met in pursuit of him, and inquiring if he was at some distance, received in answer that he was not far off; they therefore redoubled their speed, to overtake him, as they imagined; Athanasius, in the mean time, had found a place of concealment in an empty cistern, where he remained a long time

without seeing a single ray of the sun, or hearing the sound of a human voice, save that of a female servant who secretly supplied him with provisions, by the order of her employers. This servant had afterwards the baseness to betray him; but the very same night that she had concerted with his enemies to seize him, he, under the influence of a sacred presentiment, silently left the place of his retreat. When the officers of justice arrived, they found the master and mistress of the house also gone; only the servant remained; and, enraged at their disappointment, they put her into prison, and had her severely punished for having, as they supposed, deceived them by false information.

In the course of the following year, 363, Julian was killed in an expedition against the Persians, and Jovian, being elected Emperor in his place, recalled Athanasius, with every mark of respect,—entered into correspondence with him, and even insisted upon his coming to him at Antioch, that he might have the benefit of his conversation and advice on religious subjects. Unfortunately this prince was taken from his subjects almost as soon as shown to them. He died in the February following his accession to the throne, and Valentinian being chosen for his successor, divided the empire with his brother Valens, to whom he gave the eastern part, reserving the western for himself. Valens being imbued with the principles and the persecuting spirit of the Arians, immediately published an edict to replace

the bishops who had been deposed by Constantius, and who had resumed their seats under Julian. Athanasius being, from his peculiar influence, exposed to a degree of individual persecution, beyond that which threatened the rest of his brethren, was once more obliged to conceal himself. It was then that he literally descended into the tomb of his fathers, at the gates of the city of Alexandria, where he remained four months, secluded from the light of day, surrounded only by mementoes of the dead,—yet, illuminated with the light of Divine Wisdom, and glowing with immortal hopes, he did indeed make the grave to speak, and, surrounded with dry bones, poured forth the doctrines of eternal life.

The time of this venerable man's persecutions at length drew to a close. Valens, ashamed of resisting, without any adequate reason, the unceasing prayers of his people for the return of their bishop, finally permitted him peaceably to resume his functions. From this time he enjoyed comparative peace for himself and his flock; but to the latest moment of his existence his activity in the cause of truth was unabated, and he laboured incessantly for the consolation of the churches, which continued to suffer under the persecutions from which he had, by his courage and eloquence, procured a respite for his own.

“Every day,” says Basil, surnamed the Great, Bishop of Cæsarea, in one of the many letters he addressed to Athanasius respecting the persecutions

of the churches, “ confirms the high opinion I had of you. Whilst others have enough to watch over in themselves, your good offices are diffused over all. You take as much care of the universal Church, as I can do of the single one which the Lord has deigned to confide to me. You speak, you extract, you write; you send from all parts men who teach us what is best to be done in the deplorable circumstances in which we find ourselves placed.”

Thus nearly fifty years of sufferings and persecutions, in which he had to struggle against all the concentrated power and hatred of the Arians, the prejudices of Constantine, the implacable dislike of Constantius, the impious fury of Julian, the machinations of Valens; the secret artifices of calumny, and the treacherous subtleties of councils perpetually convened to insnare him; the perils of journeys through unknown paths, and concealments in uninhabited places; the fatigues, privations, watchings, and incessant occupations by which his personal strength was exhausted, all terminated to Athanasius in a brief interval of earthly repose, and a happy death on the 2d of May, 373, after having been forty-six years in the episcopacy, twenty years of which were passed in exile.

This is not the place to contrast the peaceful end of Athanasius with the dreadful one of Arius, his opponent. He has himself said, speaking of the event, “ Death is for all men the inevitable end of life, and we ought never to permit ourselves to

indulge in offensive reflections upon that of any one, even of an enemy."

The works of Athanasius have been published in three folio volumes, by De Montfauçon. The general style of his writings is clear and simple—formed for action and for rule, more than for oratory, he was forced into the fields of controversy against his inclination, and sought not for ornament wherewith to add lustre to the grandeur of his facts; in the powerful statement of truth, and the power of inspiring conviction by his arguments, he has never been surpassed.

His "Apology," addressed to the Emperor Constantius, is a *chef d'œuvre* of its kind—full of integrity and dignity. His two "Treatises against the Gentiles" contain not only a glorious vindication of the unity and greatness of God, but also a lucid exposition of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. "The Four Discourses against the Arians, combine," says that learned and skilful critic Erasmus, "nobleness with vigour, abundance with solidity, simplicity with vehemence and depth; \* \* \* \* as to the instruction to be drawn from it, it is beyond all that can be said in its praise."

His Commentaries upon different portions of the Scriptures are unfortunately many of them lost. Those that remain are full of the profound piety and practical deductions, which make the works of the Early Fathers still valuable to us; and his letters are models of zeal and Christian affection. "Atha-

nasius," says the pious and learned Milner, in his excellent History of the Church of Christ, "shines, however, more in his life than in his writings: his conduct everywhere appears consistent and upright, sharpened too much by long and cruel opposition indeed, yet never governed by malice; always principled by the fear of God, in this whole controversy (the Arian). I doubt not but he was raised by a special Providence to defend the doctrine of the Trinity; and while men of no religion are blaming his asperity, let us admire the strength of that grace, which kept him so invincibly firm and calmly magnanimous, and through his means preserved to us this precious part of Christian doctrine. The Lord has ever raised up instruments of this strong and hardy cast, to maintain his cause in the world; and let it be remembered, in regard to this great and good man, that after all the abuse thrown on his character respecting persecution, there is very much of persecution indeed, but persecution by him always suffered, never inflicted on others."

# SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS

## SAINT ATHANASIUS.

### AFFLICTIONS.

IT will import little to the faithful what may have been their trials and sorrows in this vain and miserable world, since not the slightest vestige of them will remain, when once they shall have entered into that ineffable peace which is prepared for them in the life to come.

*On Virginity.*

### BOOK OF PSALMS.

THOUGH the unity of the same spirit is to be seen throughout the whole body of the Holy Scriptures, it must yet be acknowledged, that there is in the Book of Psalms an individual grace, and a character which belongs to it in particular. No one can study it, without finding in it all the divers passions with which he may be agitated, all the varying inclinations, and also the means of calming the one and appeasing the other. The other books of the Old Testament show us, in some, the good that is to be imitated and the evil that is to be avoided, in others the prophecies concerning the coming of our Saviour, in others, the lives and actions of kings and holy personages. But the Psalms, whilst they at the same time do not omit these things, teach us moreover to become acquainted with ourselves, and to find a remedy for the spiritual maladies with which we may



be afflicted. Other books tell us that we must be penitent, submit to afflictions, and render thanks to God:—This teaches us how to humble ourselves,—how to conduct ourselves under calamity, and how to express our gratitude. Elsewhere, it is the example of others that is proposed for our imitation: here we identify ourselves with the sacred Author, and study our own history. This single volume is sufficient for all the necessities of the human heart:—there is not a situation in life in which we may not draw from it the most precious advantages. Whether we are tried by temptation or by adversity, exposed to danger or saved from peril, in sorrow or in joy, the Psalms still furnish wherewith to console and fortify us. They supply us abundantly with the language of prayer, praise, blessing, and thanksgiving—and all the virtues, graces, and duties of which Jesus Christ gave us the example, when he came on earth, are taught us in this book, with which he vouchsafed to enlighten us before his coming.

*Letter to Count Marcellin.*

#### GOD APPARENT IN HIS WORKS.

IT is true that Jesus Christ no longer shows himself to us, as formerly, in an outward shape—he no longer makes himself visible to our eyes: but does he not show himself to us in his works in such a manner as to leave us no doubt of his existence? The blind, though their eyes are not open to the brilliance of the sun's rays, are yet not less sensible of the cheering influence of his heat.

*Discourse on the Incarnation.*

#### THE GRACE OF GOD ALWAYS NECESSARY.

I CAN do nothing without the help of God, and that even from moment to moment,—for when, so long as we remain upon the earth, is there a single instant in which we can say

we are safe from temptation, secure from sin? We have need of his grace alike to preserve us from breaking the most solemn commandments of the law, or falling into the most trifling vanity of the age; and if there happily live in us some small degree of good, it is still to God alone that the merit of it is due, never to ourselves. \* \* Without the succour of his grace we never could have escaped from sin, we never could have been admitted to the blessing of being regarded as his servants.

*Works.*

#### HUMILITY.

THE truly humble Christian never inquires into the faults of his neighbour,—he takes no pleasure in judging them,—he occupies himself solely with his own.

*Supplement to his Works.*

#### IMITATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE will of Jesus Christ is, that those who belong to him should study to walk exactly in his steps: that they should be as he was, full of mercy and charity: that they should render to no one evil for evil, but that they should endure for his sake, if they are called upon so to do, injuries, calumnies, and every outrage. To them all anger and resentment should be unknown.

*Apology addressed to Constantius.*

#### INCARNATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE Word is one God, as the Father. Jesus Christ is the same God-man, born of Mary. Not another Jesus Christ, but one only—the same Jesus Christ engendered in the bosom of God the Father from all eternity; conceived in time in the womb of the Virgin his mother. Invisible before his Incarnation, even to the sublime virtues of the

heavens,—become visible since his Incarnation, by which he united himself to our nature: visible, not with respect to his Divinity, which remained still inaccessible to the eyes of men, but by the operation of his Divinity, united to a mortal nature in all respects similar to our own, which he has thus entirely renewed by the august alliance that he has contracted with it. Honour and adoration to Jesus Christ, who is, who was, and who is to come !

*Four Discourses against the Arians.*

#### MAN AT HIS CREATION.

MAN, when he came forth from the hands of his Creator, was formed for innocence and felicity. His soul, whilst it reflected the image of its God, was the ruler over the senses: but being free to determine its actions, it ceased to contemplate its Creator, and contemplated only itself, seeking, out of its celestial origin, that happiness which was only to be found in Him. It thought to find this happiness in material gratifications,—it gave the name of good to everything that dazzled the sight, or flattered the passions. Its intoxication continually increasing, carried by the very impetuosity of its desires further and further from the end to which it thought to tend, it wandered so far astray as to believe that no other Divinity existed for it than that which it found in what was before the eyes, or conceivable in the imagination. The idea of a Supreme Creator was thus gradually obliterated from its perceptions, and man made a God for himself of everything around him. Beginning with the stars and the elements, the living and the dead, all who had rendered themselves famous, whether by their exploits, their benefits, their discoveries, or even by their crimes,—all, down to the divers modifications of matter, had a share in his homages, until the human race, plunging into utter idolatry, at last

acknowledged neither law nor restraint. The animals themselves received the honours of Divine worship, and each species had its altar. Even inanimate creatures, and beings purely imaginary, were erected into so many powers superior to human nature. Ignorance, measuring the Divinity by its own weakness, distributed it into everything which surrounded it, and, in thus multiplying its forms, degraded it more and more every day; the genius of each nation, melancholy or warlike, voluptuous or severe, lent to its gods attributes and characters analogous. Poetry composed for those deities, manners, incidents, necessities, and weaknesses, similar to those of the people who worshipped them; and philosophy itself, becoming the accomplice of popular superstition, gave credit to it either by its silence, its homages, or its serious apologues.

*Discourse against the Gentiles.*

#### MAN RECALLED TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS CREATOR.

So widely estranged from the unity of the Divine essence, how was man to be brought again to the knowledge of it? To effect this end, two means had been appointed by the Lord himself. The first was the religious instinct impressed on all rational souls at the time of their creation, and which is intended to unite them constantly to Him from whom they derive their existence; but this light is soon extinguished in the thick clouds which human passions spread over it. The other means is that of which St. Paul speaks in his Epistle to the Romans,—“That which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them.

“For the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.” Divine Providence had

taken care to manifest itself to all eyes by the beauty of visible things; the magnificence and harmony of which sufficiently demonstrate one only God, the principle and regulator of all things that exist. If there had been a plurality of gods, how could that majestic and uninterrupted harmony have existed which we observe in the government of the universe, notwithstanding the perpetual shock of the opposing elements of which it is composed, and which seem incessantly to threaten its destruction? Nevertheless, the testimony of his eyes and reason was insufficient in itself to bring man to the conclusion, at once so natural and so simple, that it was necessary for him to establish. It remained, then, for him to be taught this lesson in another school. It was only God himself who could reveal his existence to him, by drawing aside the veil under which it was hidden. What, then, was the hand that He employed as the instrument to effect it?—the same of which he has said, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God\*.”

*Discourse against the Gentiles.*

#### PERSECUTION INCOMPATIBLE WITH RELIGION.

TRUE religion has a horror of all violence: she acknowledges no arguments but those of persuasion. Jesus Christ constrained no one. He left all at liberty to act as they would. “If any man *will* come after me,” says he; and again he says to his apostles, “*Will* ye also go away?”

*History of Arianism.*

\* Plato, in his “Apology of Socrates,” says, “Hope not ever to succeed in the design of reforming the morals of mankind, unless the Deity himself should be pleased to send some one from Himself to instruct you in the means;” and again, in his Dialogue entitled “Epicurus,” after eulogising piety above all earthly goods, he adds, “But who shall undertake to teach it us, unless God himself shall be our guide?”

## THE SCRIPTURES SUFFICIENT GUIDES TO SALVATION.

THE Sacred Writings declare so explicitly the nature of the faith that it is necessary to have in Jesus Christ, that, to read them is sufficient to gain a perfect knowledge of it. It is in this faith that the saints have been baptized, that they have been crowned by martyrdom, that they have put off their mortal bodies, to be reunited to Jesus Christ; and this faith would have remained holy and inviolable, if the malice of heretics had not been bold enough to endeavour to make alterations in it. We therefore present to you, O religious emperor, this profession of faith, to the end that your piety may be well assured with what exactness things are defined in it, and into what errors those may fall who teach any doctrine contrary to it. You will thus see that the truths therein inculcated are what we have always taught; that the fathers assembled at Nice have acknowledged them by a solemn testimony; that they have been received by all the churches in the world; by those of Spain, of Britain, of the Gauls, of all Italy, of Dalmatia, Dacia, Mysia, and Macedonia; of all Greece, all Africa; of Sardinia, Cyprus, Candia, Pamphylia, Isauria, Pontus, Cappadocia, and by the churches which are near us, as well as those of the East; with the exception of a very small number, who have embraced the doctrines of Arius. We know the faith of these churches by our own visits to them, and by the letters that we have from them; so that we may say that, with a very few exceptions, the Catholic and Apostolic faith is received throughout the whole earth.

*Letter to the Emperor Jovian.*

## VICTORY OF JESUS CHRIST OVER THE GRAVE.

AN incontestable proof that the power of death has been overcome by Jesus Christ upon the cross, is afforded in the

fact, that all those of his disciples who are really faithful to him, having no other support than the thought of this cross and of their faith, now contemplate death without fear; nay, brave it, and would consent to suffer it a thousand times, sooner than betray the oath which has made them Christians, so firmly are they convinced that they shall one day rise triumphant from the grave.

*Discourse on the Incarnation.*

# SAINT GREGORY OF NAZIANZUM,

*ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE.*

BORN, 328; DIED, 390.

To this great man the epithet of "The Divine" has been awarded, on account of his profound knowledge of the Scriptures, his wonderful eloquence in the explanation of them, the vigour of his reasoning, the brilliant fecundity of his imagination, and the extraordinary research of his learning. A theologian, a scholar, an orator, a poet, favoured by Nature in his person, and by fortune in his circumstances, he astonished the world by his talents, whilst he instructed it by his virtues. Heretics and pagans themselves listened to him with an admiration of his abilities, which often ended in conviction of the truth of his arguments. The churches where he preached were frequently crowded to such an excess as to cause the balustrades of the sanctuary to be broken down by the eager pressure of the people; and his discourses were written down, as they were spoken, by those who were so fortunate as to approach near enough to hear him with sufficient distinctness.

Early in life St. Gregory formed so strict a friendship with St. Basil the Great, afterwards Bishop of Cesarea, that the names of these two illustrious men



are scarcely to be separated in the history of their age, in which the actions of their lives formed some of the most striking and important features. United by similarity of pursuits and principles, by purity of conduct, love of letters, the study of eloquence, attachment to the truth, a passion for solitude, and severity of moral government, they were drawn together still more strictly by the Divine Providence which, destining them for the support of the Church, in the storms of error and impiety to which it was in their time exposed, joined them in the same labours, the same exposure to persecutions, the same firmness in the sacred cause to which they consecrated their united talents, and adorned by equal excellences; differing in their nature only enough for the characteristics of the one agreeably to contrast with those of the other.

“We see,” says an admirable critic, “in Gregory of Nazianzum, and in Basil, an eloquence, a polish, a delicate and subtle cast of thought, which, not all their contempt of the age, their penitential exercises, and the austerities of the desert, had been able to obscure; but with this difference, that the eloquence of St. Basil is more serious, that of St. Gregory more animated and joyous; that one thought more of persuading, the other of pleasing. One had more substance in what he said; the other said better what he did say: one appeared eloquent because he was so; the other, though he was eloquent enough, endeavoured to appear still more so than he was: one

respected a life of privation in its utmost rigour; the other regarded it with an affection which made it appear amiable: one was tranquil and majestic, the other full of fire and animation: one loved seriousness so entirely as to disapprove even of raillery, which, however, he was capable of using very happily; the other knew not only how to employ it innocently, but even to enlist it in the cause of virtue; in a word, one attracted respect, the other inspired love."

St. Gregory and St. Basil had likewise another blessed coincidence in their destinies,—they were both happy in having parents of eminent piety, to whom they were no doubt greatly indebted for their own. The father of St. Gregory had been in his youth immersed in the errors of paganism, but he was destined to experience the truth of St. Paul's words, that "The believing wife shall sanctify the unbelieving husband," and was converted to Christianity by the lovely example of its graces which he saw in his spouse Nona. In his fiftieth year he was called to the episcopal chair of Nazianzum, of the duties of which he acquitted himself in the most exemplary manner, even to the end of nearly another fifty years, the term of his mortal life comprising almost a century. St. Gregory, his son, pays the most filial tribute to his virtues, in a narrative of his own life, in iambic verse, composed in his old age, and addressed to the people of his church.

"I have undertaken," says he, in this curious and interesting piece of autobiography, "the history of

my life: the events of it will appear fortunate or unfortunate, according to the disposition of the reader." After an affectionate exordium to his people, he proceeds: "I had a father singularly admirable for his probity: an old man, simple in his manners,—he was a second Abraham. Very different from the hypocrites of our days, he was less anxious to appear virtuous than to be really so. Involved at first in error, he afterwards became a faithful and zealous Christian, and subsequently a pastor, and an example to pastors.

"My mother, to sum up her praises in few words, fell short in nothing of her worthy husband; born of pious parents, and still more pious than they, she was feminine only by her sex, in mind she was superior to men. She and her husband shared the admiration of the public.

"But what proofs shall I give of the facts that I advance? To whom shall I appeal as my witnesses?—To my mother? Her lips were those of truth itself; but she would rather conceal even the good that was known of her, than publish that which, being unknown, might have done her honour. The fear of the Lord was her guide,—who can have a greater Teacher?

"Longing for a son,—a longing so natural to a mother,—she entreated the Lord for one, and incessantly besought him to listen to her prayer: the impatience of her desires even went further,—she devoted to God, in anticipation, the infant she asked of him, and consecrated to him the precious gift.

“Her prayers were not put up in vain. She had a happy presage of it in her sleep: she saw in a dream the object so tenderly wished for; she distinguished exactly its features; she heard my name; and this vision of the night proved to her a happy reality.

“I came into existence, and my birth must indeed have been a blessing from heaven to my parents, if I have proved, even in a small degree, deserving of their prayers: if, on the contrary, I have been unworthy, the fault can only rest with myself, not with them.”

He continues to describe the spiritual graces that attended his infancy, nourished, as he expresses it, from his cradle with the rarest virtues, of which he saw around him the most perfect models; his early studies, his setting out from Alexandria to Greece, his danger of shipwreck, the terrors of his conscience at the thought of his being called into eternal life, with all his natural evils unregenerate about him; his vows of future devotedness to God, his putting safe into port at Egina, and finally arriving at Athens, for the completion of his studies, in 344, are all set forth with equal liveliness and simplicity.

It was singular enough, that among Gregory's fellow-students at this time was Julian, afterwards emperor, and known to succeeding ages by the name of the Apostate. Julian was at this time in all the outward profession of Christianity, and was particularly attentive to its forms; neither did he disgrace its doctrines by any immorality of conduct; nevertheless, the penetrating eye of Gregory discovered

in him the actual hypocrite and future scorner. "See," said he, one day, as he marked his restless glance and uncertain gait, "what a pest the Roman empire is nourishing in its bowels!"

It was here, also, that Gregory first became acquainted with Basil,—“That Basil,” says he, “who has rendered such important services to his times. I shared his lodgings, his studies, his meditations; and, I may venture to say, we afforded an example which reflected honour upon Greece. Everything was in common between us. It seemed as if our bodies were animated but with one soul; yet, what above all things cemented the union between us was, our devotion to God, and our love of moral excellence. \* \* \* It is in conformity of sentiment that the true association of hearts consists.

“The period, however, drew near when we were to return to our respective homes, and decide upon our professions: we had sacrificed much time to our studies. I was then nearly in my thirtieth year; I was aware of the attachment of our fellow-students, and of the advantageous opinion they had formed of us. At last the day fixed upon for our departure arrived; it was a day of grief and conflicting sentiments. Imagine to yourself our embraces, our conversations mingled with tears; our last adieus, wherein our mutual regard seemed to increase at the moment of parting! Our companions would scarcely consent to Basil’s leaving them; but when it came to me, I cannot, even at this distance of time, recall that moment without tears. I saw myself surrounded

with friends, comrades, masters, strangers, who, all uniting their entreaties and lamentations, proceeded even to lay hands upon me, for friendship allows itself such privileges, and holding me fast in their arms, protested that they would not let me go away.

\* \* \* My heart, however, yearned towards my native country, and the hope of being able to devote myself entirely to Christian philosophy. I thought, also, of the old age of my parents, bending under the burden of their long-continued labours: this determined me, and I quitted Athens secretly, but not without difficulty.

“Once more at home, the first object of my philosophy was to make a sacrifice to God, along with many other tastes, of my study of eloquence, and my passionate attachment to its fascinations. In the same cause, how many have not hesitated to abandon their flocks in the fields, and cast their gold into the unfathomable depths of the ocean!

“I found myself in a terrible perplexity when I had to decide respecting my choice of a profession.  
\* \* \* I had frequently remarked, that those who delight in active life are useful to others, but useless to themselves; that they involve their peace in a thousand troubles, and that the calm of their repose is disturbed by continual agitations. I saw, also, that those who withdraw themselves entirely from society are, as it must be confessed, more tranquil; and that their minds, unfettered by worldly cares, are in a fitter state for contemplation; but that, at

the same time, they are good only for themselves, that their benevolence is narrowed, and that their lives are equally gloomy and austère. I took the middle course, between those who fly the world altogether, and those who devote themselves to it too eagerly; resolving to share the meditations of the one, and emulate the activity of the other. I was determined so to do by motives yet more pressing: piety requires that, after God, our first duty should be paid to our parents; as it is to the existence we derive from them that we owe the happiness of becoming acquainted with Him. Mine found from me, in their advancing years, all the succour and support they had a right to expect in a son. In taking care of their old age, I endeavoured to merit that my own also should have care taken of it, when need might require: we can only expect to reap what we may have sown. I exercised my philosophy principally in concealing my predilection for a solitary life, and in endeavouring to become a servant of God, rather than to appear such. I felt the greatest reverence for those who, having embraced the public functions of the Church, invest themselves also with a holiness of character, and govern the people, in teaching the sacred mysteries of religion; yet, though I lived among men, my earnest longings after solitude seemed to consume my heart. I respected the dignity of the episcopacy; but, whilst I gazed on it with veneration from afar, I shrunk from the thought of its nearer contemplation; as weak eyes

turn away from the rays of the sun. Little did I think, then, that any circumstances could ever have the power to conduct me into its inmost sanctuary. \* \* \*

“ My father was well acquainted with my sentiments on this head ; influenced, however, by I know not what motives, animated perhaps by parental fondness, and supported by the natural love of authority, which his situation strengthened in him, he was desirous of binding me closer to him by spiritual ties ; and, in order to decorate me with such honours as it was in his power to bestow, he placed me, in spite of myself, in the second seat of the episcopal throne. I was so afflicted at this violence, for I can call it by no other name ; and may the Holy Spirit pardon him the excess of grief which he occasioned me ; I was so terrified by it, that I immediately abandoned parents, friends, neighbours, and country, and flew to Pontus, where I sought for the consolation of all my troubles in the society of a divine friend. He exercised himself in his retreat in conversing with the Lord, as the most holy of legislators had done before him, through the cloud that shadowed his brightness. This friend was Basil ; who is now with the angels. His company charmed away all my grief.

“ But my father ! that father so good, so cherished, sinking under the weight of years, and passionately desiring to see me again, conjured me by all the filial affection I had ever shown him, to grant him



this solace to his closing days. Time had softened my vexations; nevertheless I repulsed my father's paternal transports: goodness itself continually outraged, at last becomes irritated. Soon I was exposed to a new storm, so violent that I cannot describe the horror of it."

The nature of the trial here alluded to will be shortly seen. Gregory had a brother named Cæsarius, who was eminent for his skill in rhetoric, philosophy, geometry, astronomy, and medicine.—He had accepted the office of physician at the court of the Emperor Constantius, and continued it under the apostate Julian, who made an exception in his favour from the law, which prohibited Christians from holding any employments about the court. This was greatly to the grief of his brother Gregory, who stated to him that it was impossible for him thus to remain in the employment of an infidel without compromising either his fortune or his conscience. Cæsarius, struck with the force of his brother's reasoning, left the court, and was received by his pious parents with as much joy as if he had made instead of marred his worldly fortunes by the step; but being recalled to it by Jovian, after the death of Julian, he reappeared with increased favour. He was afterwards nominated by Valens, as treasurer in the province of Bithynia, which appearing a still more objectionable office to Gregory, he made fresh efforts, in which he was powerfully seconded by his friend Basil, to detach

him from the world: the impression of their united arguments on the mind of Cæsarius, was strengthened by a striking intervention of Providence in rescuing him from the effects of an earthquake at Nice, whilst he was residing there in 368, which buried the greater part of its inhabitants in ruins. Struck with so awful a lesson on the perishable nature of earthly things, he finally resolved to relinquish the pursuit of them; and whilst still in the full sincerity of his pious intentions, had the happiness of being spared the danger of apostacy, by being taken from temptation in the same year, before he had even had time formally to relinquish his employment.

“A troop of famished dogs,” says Gregory, “instantly sought to seize upon it; servants, strangers, friends, every one snapped at a part: when a tree falls, there are always plenty to run away with the branches.”

By the death of his brother, Gregory found himself still more necessary to his parents; but now came the trial to which he alludes in his narrative above. Cappadocia having been divided into two provinces, Thyamus was made the chief town of the second. Anthymus, bishop of that place, maintained that the ecclesiastical division was the same as the civil, and that in consequence, the bishops of the new Cappadocia ought no longer to be appointed as heretofore by the Bishop of Cæsarea, but by himself. Basil, at that time bishop of that city, replied that civil alterations had nothing to do with the Church,

and redoubling his cares over that part of his jurisdiction which Anthymus wished to take from him, he established several new bishoprics there, where there was in fact a great dearth of pastors; among the rest, he erected one at Suzima, and called upon his friend Gregory to undertake the duties of it. This was the severest test to which his friendship could have been exposed, and thus he expresses himself upon the occasion.

“Basil had often heard me say, that all other misfortunes appeared light to me, in contemplation, and that I could even support much more cruel ones than had ever befallen me, but that whenever I should lose my parents, I was resolved to abandon everything; and that in renouncing any settled home, I should at least, have the advantage of being the citizen of every place in which I might happen to find myself. He listened to me, he entered into my feelings, he applauded them, and yet, he it was who, by force, placed me in the episcopal chair.

“There is a wretched town in Cappadocia, situated on the high-road, in a dry and barren spot, altogether unworthy of being the residence of a free man. In this dismal, pent-up place, there is nothing to be seen but dust, nothing to be heard but the noise of chariot wheels, complaints, groans, punishments, chains, and tortures: its inhabitants are only passing travellers, and outcast vagabonds. Such is Suzima, such was my church.”

Unable to bear the thought of taking up his abode

in a place which, as he said, presented to him “only the vices and disorders of cities, without being, like them, susceptible of alteration and reform, and where he could only gather thorns, without a possibility of finding roses;” Gregory fled a second time to the deserts, and concealed himself among the mountains; but he was not now consoled by proximity to his friend, whom he had the grief to know he had offended, by his desertion of the post appointed to him; and which, as Basil rightly told him, ought to have inspired him with no thought but how, in it, he might best win souls to Christ. His filial piety, however, drew him back a second time to his paternal hearth. His father withdrew the commands by which he had before seconded the ordination of Basil respecting Suzima; but he entreated him to return, to lighten to him the duties of his own ministry, by preaching for him, and undertaking the instruction of the catechumens. So affectingly has Gregory described the eloquent appeal made on this occasion to his duty and affection by his aged parent, that every one who reads it must rejoice to think, that he did not, by remaining insensible to it, give birth in himself to the bitter reproach of thinking, too late, that it had been made in vain.

“O dearest of my children,” said he to me,—he proceeds, “it is a father who entreats his son; an old man who implores a young one; a master who humbles himself to the servant whom nature and the law have alike submitted to him. I do not ask

gold or silver, or precious stones, or fertile fields, or anything connected with luxury: all my ambition is to draw thee nearer Aaron and Samuel, and to render thee acceptable to thy God; for thou belongest to Him, who gave thee to me. Do not reject my prayers, my son, if thou wouldest not have thy heavenly Father reject thine. I ask of thee only what is just; what I have a right, as a parent, to command. Thou hast not yet, in all thy life, numbered as many years, as I have spent in the exercise of the episcopal ministry;—grant me what I desire, my son, or let another hand close my eyes: it is the only punishment I can invoke on thy disobedience. I require no long sacrifice, my last day cannot be very far distant; that day will put an end to thy submission, and afterwards thou wilt have no other inclination but thine own to consult.”

Moved by his father's entreaties, Gregory suffered himself to be installed, expressly, as he declared in a public discourse on the occasion, on a temporary commission, for the assistance of his father; with the proviso that after the death of his venerable parent, he should be at liberty to follow the dictates of his own conscience. Shortly after this concession on his part, both his parents died as they had lived, with prayers on their lips, and leaving their possessions to the poor.

Basil no sooner heard of his friend's loss than he flew to Nazianzum to console him under it: Gregory paid the last tribute to the memory of his father and mother, in an eloquent oration, delivered over their

graves, after which, resisting all the entreaties that were made him by his people to remain among them, he took up his abode in Seleucia, the capital of Isauria, where he lived nearly seven years in a solitude as profound, amidst the busy haunts of men, as that in which he had formerly secluded himself among the mountains.

In 379, however, Gregory saw himself once more imperiously called upon, by his own sense of duty to the Church, to assume the sacerdotal functions. Constantinople, at this time the capital of the East, and the residence of the Imperial Court, had all the vices and luxuries attendant upon the distinction. Of the same date in its erection with the authorized introduction of Christianity, it had no mixture of paganism, either in its public buildings, its customs, or its worship. Nevertheless, it was the hot-bed of heretical and contentious sects, the remains of the Greek philosophy, and the subtle spirit of the Alexandrian school; and all the endeavour of the respective parties was to gain over some despicable favourite or tool of the court, or the capricious despot himself, to their cause. At length, the city retained scarcely anything of Christianity but the name, and the church there saw itself threatened by a Synod, expressly convened in the hope of establishing the Arian heresy. Gregory was entreated by the faithful to attend, and give the support of his eloquence to the Gospel as it had been received by their fathers, and preached by the

Apostles. He was at that time in very weak health, owing to the austerities of his mode of life—he knew how many enemies he had made to himself, even among his own people, by having refused to continue in the episcopal functions, and he was aware that among the Arians he should find the most active and powerful enemies. Nevertheless, he felt that the time was come for him to put his hand to the plough, and he arose, determined not to look back. It was at this time that Peter, Archbishop of Alexandria, invested him with the episcopal authority in Constantinople, a circumstance which by awakening envy in addition to the other evil passions already in full action against him, greatly increased the persecutions to which he was exposed immediately after his arrival in that city. He was likewise grievously tried by afflictions in his own church, and by seeing the honours of the episcopacy fraudulently obtained by Maximus, an abandoned character, by whose pretensions to sanctity he had been utterly duped; for, as he justly observes, in speaking of the occurrence, “what is so easy as to deceive him who is himself incapable of deception?” Even his virtues were turned against him, and the charity with which he endeavoured to reconcile jarring opinions, was placed to the account of a time-serving spirit, and a desire of self-aggrandisement—charges which every action of his life disproved.

It is melancholy to reflect upon the malignant passions of mankind, even of those who call them-

selves Christians;—under the influence of these passions Gregory was exposed on more than one occasion to the utmost danger; his church was broken in upon by an armed force; his congregation terrified, wounded, scattered; the sacred altars insulted, and the place profaned by every impious outrage. Still his wonderful eloquence, and apostolic zeal, rapidly increased the number of his hearers, his admirers, his converts; till his church, his beloved Anastasia, as he called it, in allusion to the revival of religious truth in it, which he likened to a resurrection, of which he had at first been tauntingly told he could not fill even the vestibule, overflowed; and the sight of the crowd that thronged its doors furnished additional food for hatred against him, to those who stood aloof.

Nevertheless, it was not his own renown that Gregory sought, and though sustained in his seat by the favour of the Emperor Theodosius, he yet found himself exposed to so many contending opinions, particularly from the bishops of Egypt and Macedonia, that he sighed more than ever for the tranquillity of the solitude he had always aspired to, if he could seek it without compromising the duties of his station, and the interests of the Church. He accordingly called a meeting of the bishops and of his people, to whom he testified in an affecting harangue, his desire to relinquish an office, into which he had been originally installed contrary to his inclinations.



“After making this statement,” says he, “I left the assembly, with a satisfaction mingled with sorrow. The idea of the calm I might hope to enjoy after so many anxieties, diffused a sweet serenity over my soul, but the fate of my flock disquieted me. What would become of them? They were my children: what father can ever separate himself from his children without regret? Such was the situation in which I saw myself placed. God knows, and the prelates themselves before whom I spoke know, whether what they said to me upon that occasion was sincere, or whether their words were not like the rocks hidden by the sea, for vessels to be wrecked upon. Many have not scrupled to say they were so, but as for myself I am silent. I shall not waste my time in endeavouring to fathom hearts whose depths are beyond my reach. Simplicity and truth have always been my guides—as they are to salvation, which is the sole object of my anxiety.”

There is little doubt, but that in the fear and envy which the talents of Gregory inspired in all parties, except the very small one of the truly estimable, the real secret was to be found, of the “prompt and unanimous consent” with which he states his offer of retirement to have been received. “Thus it is,” says he, with a natural burst of wounded feeling, “that a country recompenses the citizens she professes to love! Where shall I seek refuge on quitting this place? In the society of the angels;—there I need not fear hatred, and shall not want

favour. \* \* \* \* I am sick of censures and of praises. I seek a desert inaccessible to the wicked; an asylum where my soul shall occupy itself with God alone, and where the hope of heaven shall afford nourishment to my old age. And what have I to bequeath the churches? My tears; it is to them that Providence has reduced me, at the close of a life agitated by so many vicissitudes."

Previous to his quitting his flock, Gregory took leave of them in the celebrated farewell discourse known among his works by the title of his "Adieus." He likewise made a speech to the Emperor before his departure, full of noble, manly, and independent feeling. "The Emperor," says he, "publicly praised my discourse—his courtiers applauded it;" *of course*, he might have added; "and I obtained my leave to depart; the prince, it was said, granted it with regret—nevertheless, he did grant it." What a commentary are these few simple words on the injunction of the Psalmist,—“Put not your trust in princes.”

Thus descending voluntarily from the episcopal dignity of Constantinople, St. Gregory directed his steps, as a humble individual, into Cappadocia; stopping at Cæsarea on his way, to render the last duties of friendship to the memory of his beloved Basil, who had died there the year before, in an oration on his virtues, which he delivered before the clergy and people of that city. He then proceeded to Nazianzum, where he was strongly solicited to

resume the duties of the episcopacy; but dreading the party-spirit which unhappily in his absence had split the place into factions, he prevailed upon the inhabitants to accept of Eusebius in his stead, and hastened, himself, into the retirement he so passionately desired; choosing, for that purpose, a spot near the cemetery of his native city, and placing his most luxurious enjoyments in the cultivation of flowers, the hum of bees, and the murmurs of a fountain. He divided his time between the exercises of piety and the study of literature, which he cultivated not only with his friends, but with strangers, whose merit claimed his consideration; charming, at intervals, with poetry the remembrance of the cares with which his life had been beset. This was the parting radiance of the setting sun, after a stormy day. Worn out by fatigues of mind and body, operating too powerfully on an ardent spirit, enclosed within a feeble frame; he died in 390, at the age of sixty-two years, about seven or eight years after his retreat, full of hope and confidence in the Saviour-God to whom he had devoted himself with equal sincerity and humility.

Great men live in their works, and their memory is embalmed in the example of their virtues. After the storms that ruffled their lives have passed away with life itself, the fruits of their hours of cherished leisure, the lessons which they have drawn from their own sorrowful experience of men, and even of their own hearts, remain to us as a precious legacy,

still claiming our gratitude and exciting our admiration. So it is with St. Gregory of Nazianzum: his "Discourse upon the Dignity and Duties of the Sacerdotal Office," written as an apology for his own reluctance to take the labours of the ministry upon himself, is a masterpiece of eloquence, feeling, and profound humility. His remarks upon the qualities requisite in a pastor, the solemn responsibility of his charge, the difficulties attendant upon it, and the sin of assuming it from any worldly motive whatsoever, are so irresistibly powerful, that it would be well if the perusal of them could be made to form an indispensable part of the studies of every candidate for holy orders.

His principal Orations are also models of eloquence, and his "Adieu to his People" has been compared with, and considered superior to, the celebrated harangue by Cicero in favour of Milo, which was deemed the triumph of Roman eloquence. His discourses, "On the Love of the Poor," "On Moderation," "On Disputes," and "On Schism," are replete with the purest morality. His Treatises on the Mysteries of Religion procured him the reputation of the most profound theologian of his time; and his poetry, full of lofty thoughts and beautiful imagery, varies, at intervals, his more abstract disquisitions, like sweet and solemn music, listened to amidst all that nature offers of sublimity and grandeur to the contemplation. The Christian teachers of this period were indeed poets from necessity, as

well as inclination. Julian the Apostate allowed himself every injustice against the professors of the Gospel that he could indulge in, without forfeiting the claim to moderation, which he particularly affected; dreading the talents of men like Gregory, Basil, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Augustine, and many others, whose minds were saturate with profane as well as sacred learning, he passed an edict forbidding the Christians to teach anything whatsoever but what was immediately connected with their religion. "It is not fitting," said he, "that you should comment on Pagan writers, so long as you condemn their doctrines: you believe that Homer, Hesiod, and their followers, are in error; content yourselves, then, with explaining Matthew and Luke in the churches of the Galileans." The Christians felt this interdiction to be, what it was intended, a severe restriction of their influence over the minds of youth, and an endeavour to render their instruction dry and uninteresting, by thus limiting its sphere: they would have deemed the open persecution of the sword less trying to their patience; but they consoled themselves for a prohibition which the Pagans themselves acknowledged to be unjust, by clothing the truths of religion in the harmony of numbers, and composing hymns, odes, and even tragedies, on sacred subjects, wherewith to instruct and solace their pupils.

## SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS

### SAINT GREGORY OF NAZIANZUM.

#### AFFLICTIONS.

As a traveller who having just escaped the fury of a lion,  
encounters immediately afterwards an angry bear,  
And who, delivered from his new peril, and thankfully  
reaching his own gate,  
Should no sooner rest his hand upon the wall, than a  
serpent should dart forth from it; and bite him,  
So does one affliction after another lie in wait for me,  
And the latest that I fall into, always seems the most  
grievous to endure.

*Poems.*

#### APOSTROPHE TO HIS BROTHER.

OH! may the heavens be now thy dwelling-place, spirit  
divine, æthereal! and in the bosom of Abraham (whatever  
that may be) mayest thou sweetly rest! Mayest thou  
survey the chorus of the angels, the glory and the lustre of  
enraptured saints; or rather, mayest thou join the angelic  
dance and exult with blest immortals! from thine earth-  
deriding eminence looking down with pity on this mortal  
scene; that pile denominated wealth; those dignities cast  
off by thee, those fallacious honours, that error which the  
senses cause, the ambiguous toils of life, and that confusion,  
as in a battle fought by night; standing near to the King  
Almighty, and by him replenished with streams of light

and glory, whose slender rivulet we here discern, faintly viewing it through glasses and enigmas. Oh! may we reach the fount of good; viewing with unclouded intellect, the unclouded lustre of truth, and crowned with this reward of our labours here, the contemplation and enjoyment of the blessings there! That such will be the end of our mystic discipline the sacred books proclaim, and enlightened minds predict.

*Funeral Oration on Cæsius, A. D. 358.*

#### APOSTROPHE TO HIS SISTER,

Who, as she was expiring, faintly pronounced the words of David :—  
 “ I will lay me down in peace.” Psalm iv. 8.

THESE things, O peerless among women, were chaunted by thee, and happened unto thee: the psalmody which thou didst breathe, was the event which did befall: thine epitaph accompanied thy departure. Unruffled by the passions’ storm, calmly and serenely thou didst live, my sister; and when it was appointed thee to die, the slumbers of the just were superadded to the sleep of nature. In both, thy lot was suitable; for, living and dying, thy words were the words of piety.

I am assured, that the wonders which now burst upon thee, are more glorious and inestimable far, than the objects of material sense; the melody of rejoicing saints—the chorus of angels—the bright, seraphic host—the purer and more perfect splendour of the most exalted Trinity; no longer fleeing the imprisoned mind, no more eluding the ineffectual sense, but possessed and contemplated in cloudless majesty by unclouded intellect, and beaming on our souls in the full blaze of Deity! All these objects mayest thou enjoy, whose radiance even upon earth enlightened thee, because the aspirations of thy soul were fervent.

*Funeral Oration on Gorgonia, A. D. 370.*

## APPEAL IN BEHALF OF THE POOR.

IT is not against the unprincipled, the wicked, that we wage war—no ; it is solely against the unfortunate. We suffer duellists, adulterers, blasphemers, to sit at our table ; nay, too often, when they are rich and powerful, we search them out and pay assiduous court to them : it is only the poor that we shun, and turn their misery against them as a crime. Repulsed without pity from houses, streets, public meetings, festivities, scarcely are they permitted to breathe the common air. The very water of the fountains is interdicted to them, as if it could be poisoned even by their lips. Wandering, day and night without a place to lay their heads, almost without clothes, too often afflicted with bodily sufferings, they implore aloud the help of the God who created them—they pour forth plaintive songs in the hope of exciting pity—and after all what is it they ask ? a morsel of bread, a coarse garment ! We leave them exposed to all the inclemencies of the weather, whilst we inhabit the most commodious and magnificent houses, adorned with marbles of every different colour ; gold and silver shining on our tables, and the most costly pictures attracting the eye to gaze upon our walls. But one house is not sufficient for us, we must build others,—for whom ? for our heirs, who may never possess them ; perhaps for strangers, even for enemies ! The poor shake with cold beneath their miserable rags, whilst we envelop ourselves in long and floating robes of the finest linens and silks. The poor scarcely can find a refuse morsel wherewith to appease the cravings of their hunger ; we luxuriate in the choicest delicacies. What shame to us ! What grief to them ! They are stretched at our doors, languishing, expiring of want, with scarcely strength to articulate their necessities, some-



times unable either to extend their hands towards the rich, or to walk far enough to throw themselves at their feet, or even to give utterance to the cries with which they would implore their compassion. Such is the deplorable state to which they are reduced ; whilst we !—we sleep in voluptuous beds, guarded from the rays of the sun. We pass our days in apartments scented with precious perfumes, with flowers which we force to bloom for us in seasons nature never intended for them. We lavish on our tables the most delicate odours, as if our courage were not already sufficiently enervated ; these same tables bending beneath dishes for which all the divers elements have been laid under contribution ; and all to satisfy the avidity of an ungrateful belly, an insatiable and perfidious brute, which will soon be destroyed along with the perishable viands that are accumulated to nourish it. The poor would think themselves happy to get water wherewith to quench their thirst, and we drink wine to excess, even after we feel our senses disordered by its potency. My brethren, my dear friends, these are diseases of the soul, more grievous to the rich, than those of the body with which the poor are afflicted. Theirs are not their own seeking, ours are what we bring upon ourselves—theirs, death will deliver them from—ours will go with us to the grave, and rise with us from it, likewise.

*Homily on the Love of the Poor.*

#### CELEBRATION OF EASTER.

THE Paschal Lamb of the Jews was a type of that of the Christians. We have escaped the tyranny of Pharaoh. Crucified with Jesus Christ, we are also glorified with him. He is dead, let us die with him. He is risen again, let us rise with him. Let us sacrifice every thing to him who has

sacrificed himself as the price of our redemption. Let us do for him what he has done for us.

*Homily on the Resurrection of the Saviour.*

#### COMING OF THE LORD.

WE see the angels glorify him in the highest heavens, as the INFINITE ETERNAL GOD, and adore Him upon the earth, as God in man. The shepherds crowd around his cradle, and contemplate with delight the lovely features of the Divine Infant, the Lamb without spot. The Magi themselves come to him conducted by the star which his puissance causes to shine in the heavens, the moment he is laid upon the straw; they offer him mysterious presents, and announce by the adorations they render to him, that which the whole universe is about to pay to his holy name.

*Discourse on the Dignities and Duties of the Sacerdotal Office.*

#### CONNEXION BETWEEN THE SOUL AND BODY.

SCARCELY can I conceive, even to myself, this union between my body and my soul—how is it that I bear upon me the stamp of the divinity, and that at the same time I grovel in the dust? Is my body in health, it wars against me—Is it sick, I languish with it in sympathy—It is at once a companion that I love, and an enemy that I dread—It is a prison that frightens me, a partner with whom I dwell. If I weaken it by excess, I become incapable of any thing noble; if I indulge it, or treat it with too much consideration, it revolts, and my slave escapes me. It fastens me to the earth by ties I cannot break; and prevents me from taking my upward flight to God, for which end alone I was created. It is an enemy that I love, a treacherous friend whom it is my duty to distrust. To fear and yet to love! At once what union, and what discord!

For what end, with what secret motive, is it that man has been thus organized? Is it not that God has seen it fit by this means to humble our pride, which might otherwise have carried us to the height of disdaining even our Creator, in the thought that, being derived from the same fount of being, we might be permitted to regard ourselves as on terms of equality with Him? It is then to recall us incessantly to the sense of our entire dependence on him, that God has reduced our bodies to this state of frailty, which exposes it to perpetual combats: balancing our nobleness by our baseness; holding us in suspense between death and immortality, according to the affection which inclines us to the body or the soul; so that, if the excellences of our souls should inspire us with pride, the imperfections inseparable from our bodies may bring us back to humility.

*Discourse on the Love of the Poor.*

#### CONSOLATION.

O, MY mother, the nature of God and Man is not the same, nor is even that of celestial and terrestrial beings. Celestial beings are unchangeable and immortal, not only in essence, but in the attributes of essence.

Permanence is the property of the permanent. But how is it with us? Our contingencies dissolve and perish, the victims of perpetual decay and change. Life and death, as they are called, which seem at first of contrarious natures, unite together at the last, the one succeeding to the place of the other. The one, originating from corruption, which is our mother, and proceeding through all the changes of corruption, terminates in corruption, the end of life; the other concludes the scene of our afflictions, and oft transplants us to the realms of bliss. I know not if it can justly be

entitled death, more terrible in the name than in the substance. Indeed, our reason is most preposterous, our minds most weak : we dread those things which present no cause of fear, and those which we ought to shun we consider as desirable. There is one life—to look forward to the life above. There is one death—sin ; for it is that which destroys the soul. All things else, however esteemed and prized by some, are the mere shadows of dreams, the insidious phantoms of the mind. O, my mother ! if we would reason thus, we should neither depend too much on life, nor grieve immoderately at death. What loss, what calamity have we sustained, if we are translated to a real existence ? if, liberated from the changes, and the giddiness, and the satieties, and the base extortions of the world, we dwell with permanent, imperishable beings, and shine, like lesser luminaries, encircling in choral dance the one Grand Light ? Thou wilt tell me, thy widowhood afflicts thee. Let hope be thy consolation. Thy separation grieves thee ; but it is not grievous unto him. And where would be the sweet virtue of charity, if a man, choosing for himself the smoothest path, should leave the more rugged and toilsome way unto his neighbour ? What evil can really affect her who, in a little time, shall feel no more ? The predestinated day is near. Sorrow is not immortal. Let us not aggravate the lightest woes with ungenerous and ignoble thoughts. If we have been bereaved of the choicest blessings, we have enjoyed them too ; to be bereft is the lot of all ; to enjoy is not the lot of many. Let not that perturb the serenity of our minds, but let this console and animate us. It is reasonable that the better should prevail. Thou needest a supporter of thine age. Where is thy son, thine Isaac, whom, in exchange for all, he bequeathed to thee ?—Demand of him those trifling services of love, to lead thee by the hand, to be a slave to thee, and bless him with far greater

in return ; his mother's benediction, his mother's prayers, and liberty in the realms above!

*Funeral Oration on his Father.*

CONTEMPLATION OF HIMSELF.

FLYING the society of men, and pursued by melancholy, I threw myself under the shade of the forest-trees, to indulge in contemplation.

How sweet a solace is it to our griefs to be able to commune freely in solitude with our own hearts !

Thousands of birds, perched upon the branches, animated the air, which echoed to their harmonious songs, and inspired my soul with a secret enjoyment.

Hidden in the verdure which sprang around, the grasshopper—that lover of the sun—mixed its noisy voice with their melodious notes, which rang through the interstices of the grove.

The waters of a clear brook, purling close at my side, refreshed the parched earth.

Yet, notwithstanding the beauties of nature, my soul did not smart the less under its wounds.

It still plunged into the varying thoughts by which it is so often agitated.

What was I before I was born ? what am I now ? what shall I be to-morrow ?

A thick film seemed to obscure my mental view.

I asked the learned to guide me, but I found no one who knew any more than myself.

Wrapped in impenetrable clouds, I wander from desire to desire, without being able to satisfy myself respecting the object of my wishes ; not even with the illusions of a dream.

This fleshly frame, in which we are held captive, intercepts every ray of light.

I *exist*—what does the word mean? teach me!

Already, whilst I speak, a portion of my existence has escaped me.

I am no longer what I was.

What shall I be to-morrow should I still exist?

In no one thing stable, in no one thing permanent, I resemble the water of a stream, which perpetually flows on, which nothing stops.

Or rather,—but of all the objects which surround me, to what can I compare myself?

Like the brook, in another moment I shall be no longer the same that I was the moment before.

I ought to be called by some other name.

You seize me now, you hold me, yet I escape.

Fugitive wave! never again will you traverse the space over which you have already flowed.

The same man whom you have once reflected in your waters will never be reflected by them again, exactly as he looked in them before.

*Poems.*

#### DIFFERENT CONDITIONS OF MEN.

PROUD of his name, which he disgraced by his vices, a patrician, wishing to mortify a person of humble birth, but of great merit, reproached him with the meanness of his origin.

The sage, far from being angry, replied, smiling, “My origin may dishonour me, but you dishonour your origin.”

An admirable reply, deserving of perpetual remembrance.

It ought to remind us constantly that there can be no distinction so great as that of merit.

If any one were to reproach you with your ugliness, or your bad breath, would it be enough for you, may I ask, to

boast of the beauty of your father, or the perfumes he might exhale?

If you are laughed at for your indolence or your cowardice, would you excuse yourself by reckoning up the prizes your ancestors may have carried off in the Olympic games?

If you are amenable for your vices or your follies, what good does it do to talk of your forefathers, and rake up the ashes of the dead?

One musician may draw forth nothing but discordant sounds from a lyre of gold, and another give birth to ravishing melodies on a simple reed.

Which of the two is the best performer?

Is it not he whose skilful combinations produce the most perfect harmony?

Such is your history, my friend; you are the descendant of an illustrious race.

It is to you, the lyre of gold.

But if you have no merit in yourself, upon what can you build your pride?

What real subject of exaltation can you find for yourself in your ancestors so long since dead?

In uncertain traditions and fabulous stories, which often afford food for ridicule?

Foolish vanity! what is all that to us?

It is with yourself alone, that we have to do.

Are you good or bad? every thing is reduced to that simple question.

Let all of us go back to our first origin—what are we?

All formed of the same dust—all covered with the same frail envelope.

Weak creatures! shall we, after thus examining into ourselves, still boast of our riches, our glory, the lustre of our ancestry?

Let us be serious—what is your genealogy to me?—fables and tombs ; it is yourself alone that I appreciate.

We are all the same clay ; we are all the same fragile vases, moulded by the hand of the same potter.

It is pride, and not nature, which has drawn this line of demarcation between men.

Trust me, it is the wicked man alone that is the slave, and only the virtuous that is truly free.

Nothing can be more irrational than the pride of birth.

Do not even the eagles occasionally hatch such degenerate young, that they themselves cast them, indignantly, out of their nests ?

Virtue, without nobility, is better than nobility without virtue : the rose springs from a thorn,—is it for that less beautiful ?

And are not the parasite weeds that overrun a fertile soil gathered up and burnt, because they serve for no other use ?

*Poems.*

#### DUTY OF A PASTOR.

WHAT, on the contrary, is the object of a pastor ? It is to give to souls which crawl in the dust like a worm, the flight and rapidity of the eagle ; to detach them from the earth, and consecrate them to God ; to restore and confirm in them the image and character of the Divinity ; to introduce them into, and form them after, Jesus Christ, by the virtue of the Holy Spirit ; it is, in short, to transform man into God, and to procure him the eternal felicity for which he has been created. Such is the end of the pastoral functions, and of the Holy Ministry. It is the same end that God himself has had in view from all eternity, in every thing that he has accomplished, ineffable and grand, in favour of man.

*Discourse on the Dignities and Duties of the  
Sacerdotal Character.*



## DUTY OF A WIFE.

IN the first place, honour God, then respect your husband as the eye of your life, for he is to direct your conduct and actions; love only him—make him your joy and your comfort—take care never to give him any occasion of offence or disgust—yield to him in his anger—comfort and assist him in his pains and afflictions, speaking to him with sweetness and tenderness, and making him prudent and modest remonstrances at seasonable times. It is not by violence and strength that the keepers of lions endeavour to tame them when they see them enraged; no, they soothe and caress them, stroking them gently, and speaking in a soft voice. Never let his weaknesses be the subject of your reproaches: it can at no time be just or allowable for you to treat thus a person whom you ought to prefer to the whole world.

*Poem addressed to Olympias.*

## ELEGY UPON ST. BASIL.

WHY may I not to this same grave descend,  
That holds the ashes of my earliest friend,  
As my lone heart desires? Once broke my chains,  
I should perceive my exit to its close  
Draw near—the end of all my weary pains—  
A sweet repose!

Oh, why, my friend, delay thy call so long?  
I listen for thy voice; O let me hear  
Thy summons, let me know my moment near  
To quit the throng.

Thy soul from this vile dust itself hath freed,  
And winged its upward flight; its task decreed  
On earth fulfilled, it takes its blessed rest  
Upon the bosom of the Lord, whilst tears  
And groans the fruitless grief of crowds attest,  
And tell their fears.

He is no more—he is no more, they cry ;  
 And error boasts herself, and discord smiles ;  
 Herald of peace, return, unmask their wiles,  
 And bid them fly.

Come to our aid ; in thee will virtue shine  
 Without a cloud, and by her light divine  
 Disperse the gathering storm,—a faithful aid ;  
 She ever in thy words, thy actions found,  
 By them her precepts taught, her laws conveyed  
 To all around.

My grief what tender recollections feed,  
 O Athens ! O, ye academic bowers,  
 Sweet oaths of friendship, calm confiding hours,  
 Your aid I need.

A thousand times we've pledged ourselves to blend  
 Our lives and counsels faithful to the end,  
 Yet he is gone, and I am lingering here,  
 Watering with tears his monumental stone :  
 For him the cloudless skies, the radiant sphere,  
 I weep alone.

#### ENDEARING RECOLLECTIONS.

CÆSARIUS is no longer with me, and I will confess, although philosophy may condemn the feeling, I cling to every thing which concerns Cæsarius. If I meet with aught which reminds me of Cæsarius, I press it to my lips, I press it to my heart, and methinks I still gaze upon his form, still hear his converse, and impart my own. A similar sensation your letter has excited. As soon as I beheld the epistle's signature, the name Philagrius, (a name to me transporting,) the joys of other years danced again in my bosom, and memory retraced our lives that had been spent together : the frugal board, the willing poverty, the loved society of congenial

companions, sometimes sportive, sometimes serious; the applause of our preceptor refreshing the weary brow of literary achievement; the ardour of our hopes, and that flow of pleasures unimbittered, which even in remembrance impresses with no common joy. Wherefore, that we may again be associated, awaken the energy of your pen, and gratify your friend by frequency of correspondence. This will be no inconsiderable solace, although of the highest of enjoyments, (your society,) invidious fortune has bereaved me.

*Letter to Philagrius.*

#### EPITAPH ON HIMSELF.

YE hosts angelic, whose refulgent rays  
Dart through illimitable heaven a blaze  
Of glory, who surround the dazzling height,  
The sapphire throne, where beams the Triune light,  
Receive, benignant, to your blest abode,  
Me, the unworthy, yet the priest of God !

#### FEAR OF GOD.

LET us incessantly bear in mind that the only thing we have really to be afraid of is, fearing any thing more than God.

*Homily on the Celebration of Festivals.*

#### GOODNESS OF GOD.

ADMIRE the excess of God's goodness ! He vouchsafes to accept our desires, as if they were things of great value. He burns with an ardent desire that we should vehemently desire and love him ; and he receives the petitions we put up for his benefits, as if it were a benefit to himself, and a favour we did him. He has greater joy in giving than we have in receiving. Let us only be careful not to be too

indifferent in our requests, or to set too narrow bounds to our desires and pretensions; and let us never ask frivolous things, which it would be unworthy of his magnificence to petition him for. There is nothing so great before God, which the least among men is not able to offer as well as the greatest prince or most profound scholar. Give but *yourself* to him with pure and perfect love.

—  
*Oration XL.*

#### INSTABILITY OF HUMAN THINGS.

WHAT am I? whence do I come?

After having returned to the bosom of the earth, what shall I be when I shake off the dust of the tomb?

What stay will it please God to assign me here below?

Am I destined by Him for a better life?

In escaping from the storms of this world, shall I find at last a tranquil haven?

How many paths are opened to us in the career of life; but how many troubles encompass them around!

There is no good here below without alloy: would to God, only, that the evil did not form the predominant part!

What, in fact, are riches?—a shifting sand.

The throne?—a dream of pride.

The condition of a subject?—a torment.

Poverty?—a suffering.

Beauty?—a transient flash.

Youth?—a moment of effervescence.

Old age?—a sorrowful decline.

Fame?—a passing sound, more rapid than the bird upon the wing.

Glory?—a breath of wind.

Nobility?—blood impoverished by age.

Strength?—the attribute of ferocious beasts.

The pleasures of the table?—an incentive to all disorders.

Marriage?—a bondage.

Children?—a source of chagrin.

Celibacy?—a disease.

The bar?—an arena of corruption.

Retreat?—an avowal of incapacity.

The arts?—the portion of the lowest classes.

Domestic life?—a restraint on every movement.

Agriculture?—an overwhelming fatigue.

Navigation?—a danger which we can only escape by chance.

Our native country?—a gulf that absorbs every thing.

A foreign land?—an opprobrium.

Yes; all below is pain and grief to unhappy mortals.

Life is a smile that flutters on our lips.

The thistle-down floating in the air.

A shadow, an appearance, a dewdrop, a breath.

The rapid flight of a bird, a dream, an agitated wave.

A torrent which flows away, the track of a vessel on the  
water, a gale of wind.

A handful of dust; a turning-wheel, the revolutions of  
which, sometimes quick and sometimes slow, bring con-  
stantly round the same events.

The seasons, days and nights, labours, pleasures, vexations.

Maladies, deaths, successes, reverses.

Yet this very instability of human things, O blessed wisdom  
of God, is in the perfection of thy decrees;

That by it we may be compelled to seek after solid and  
unchangeable good.

*Poems.*

#### LETTER-WRITING.

THE length of a letter ought to be determined by its utility. What use is it to write a long letter, if you have only a little to say, or to confine yourself to a few lines, when you have much to communicate? It is good to avoid either extreme,

and to observe in this, as in other things, a happy medium. The kind of precision I require in a letter is that clearness which consists in avoiding, as much as possible, losing yourself in a cloud of useless words, that prove nothing more than an idle itch of talking, in those who have recourse to them ; for, after all, the chief merit of a letter is in making itself equally acceptable to the ignorant and the learned ; to the former by speaking to them in a language intelligible to the meanest capacities, to the latter by being expressed in a style free from any thing low or common-place, and which is yet perfectly easy of comprehension ; for nothing is so wearisome in a letter as to have to search for the sense, as in an enigma, and to be obliged to comment upon the meaning of every passage as you read it. The next merit in epistolary composition is agreeableness. We must not hope for this merit in a meagre subject, devoid of any interest in itself ; any more than in a style deficient alike in elegance and ornament, which can only inspire weariness and disgust, if it borrow nothing from pointed sayings or sententious allusions, or any of those pertinent remarks by which conversation is seasoned and enlivened. Not that we ought to permit ourselves any excess in regard to these aids ; on the contrary, we ought to be cautious respecting the use of them, and to employ them with great frugality. The first and principal consideration, however, is to be *natural* in every thing we say. The birds wished one day to elect a king ; each boasted of his own qualifications, but all finally agreed to choose the eagle, thinking him superior to the rest, precisely because he said nothing about himself.

*Letters.*

#### LIBERALITY TO THE UNFORTUNATE.

To give to those who, after having been accustomed to the ease of independence, have fallen into indigence, barely what

their necessities may rigorously require, is only to make them sensible of the full extent of their misery; not to solace them by lessening the burden of it\*.

*Funereal Eulogy on his Parents.*

#### OPPOSITES IN MAN.

THE seductions of the world draw me to one side, duty recalls me to the other; God and my passions, time and eternity, divide my soul. I look at myself with horror, yet I find pleasure in contemplating that which is my ruin. I laugh at the death which I carry within me—fatal mirth, which conducts me to my fall!—strange mixture of contradictory feelings. To-day I crawl upon the earth, to-morrow I soar above the clouds. Alternately humble and lofty, I take the most different forms, and change according to the time, always in contradiction to myself; so we see the poly-pus assume the colour of the rocks on which it fastens.

\* This remark, fraught with delicate feeling and true compassion, cannot be too much impressed on the observation of those whom the Almighty has blessed with affluence, and shielded from reverses of fortune. It is wonderful how little sympathy the rich in general feel towards those who, perhaps once of equal rank, and possibly of superior refinement with themselves, have fallen into poverty. They imagine themselves charitable because they give small sums to the poor, oftener, it is to be feared, on account of having the parable of the rich man and Lazarus rather than that of the good Samaritan before their eyes; but how little do they know of the real "luxury of doing good!" how seldom do they join to their pecuniary aid those sincere condolences, those heartfelt desires to relieve mental anguish, as well as bodily privations, which so soothingly reconcile even the most delicate mind to the burden of obligation! How seldom they put themselves into the place of those unfortunates whom unexpected adversity has cast out of their original position in society, and deprived of the comforts and the attentions to which they have been from infancy accustomed; on the contrary, they too often seem to imagine that any little succour administered to them is to last for ever; judging of what is requisite for them rather by the appearance to which their poverty has reduced them, than by the refinement of thought and delicacy of feeling that still remain to them, amidst the misfortunes which they heighten.

Floods of tears fall from my eyes, but they do not wash  
away my fault in their course.

I have wept the very fountain of them dry, but to my past  
errors new ones succeed.

Thus I lose at once the remedy and the hope of cure.

My body is pure, why can I not say the same of my soul?

Modesty is in my countenance, but desire in my heart.

Clear-sighted to the defects of others, blind to my own, my  
language is in heaven, my feelings on earth.

I seem tranquil and impenetrable to fear, but the slightest  
wind that blows exposes me a prey to the most violent  
storms;

Neither does the tempest appease itself till the heavens reco-  
ver their serenity, and then where is the merit of objects  
below beaming once more calm?

Often I appear to be advancing satisfactorily on my way ;  
already I seem to have affranchised the ordinary limits  
of human virtue—already I seem to have attained a  
more glorious end, when, at a single blow, my inde-  
fatigable enemy brings me to the earth.

The traveller who crosses the sandy plain sees the uncertain  
soil slide away beneath his tread :

Thus, when I would step firmly forward, I find my feet slip  
back, in spite of themselves :

And if, notwithstanding my reiterated disappointments and  
the despondency that seizes in consequence on my soul,  
I at last succeed in elevating myself for a time, sud-  
denly some fresh fall deprives me of the fruit of all my  
efforts.

*Poems.*

#### ORDER IN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNIVERSE.

LET us raise our eyes to heaven, let us contemplate the  
earth, let us consider how all the separate parts of the uni-



verse have been brought together ; let us recall their origin, let us figure to ourselves what they were before they were regulated in harmonious ORDER, and reflect upon the name itself by which we designate this marvellous assemblage of varied being\*.

It is ORDER by which the admirable arrangement of the whole structure has been framed, and this ORDER is the WORD, the eternal Wisdom of God. Undoubtedly he was able, had he so willed, to have produced all things simultaneously ; for he who could draw creation out of nothing could have equally created its separate parts, at one and the same moment ; but he willed them to be produced at intervals, in order that his WISDOM might be made manifest through every gradation of his works.

It is ORDER, then, which has assembled all things, united them together, and continues to maintain them in their courses, as well terrestrial as celestial, visible as invisible.

ORDER reigns throughout the angelic choirs ; it shines in the movement of the stars, in their magnitudes, in their influences, in their different degrees of light. “ *There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars ; for one star differeth from another star in glory.*”

ORDER regulates the course of the seasons, and the different periods of the year ; tempering and correcting the violence of one by the mildness of another : ORDER divides the intervals so well proportioned, between the day and the night, and distributes the elements of which different bodies are composed.

It is ORDER which has constructed those azure vaults ; which has measured out the air ; which has placed the earth

\* Alluding to the Greek word *Κοσμος*, which signifies the world, or universe, and, at the same time, *order*, ornament, and beauty.

firmly beneath the brilliant stars that enlighten it, or rather which has suspended it amidst the vast extent of the heavens: it is ORDER which has given their fluidity to the waters, and assembled them together in the immensity of the ocean: it is ORDER which moderates the impetuosity of the winds, and prevents them from ravaging the earth and destroying its inhabitants; it is ORDER which supports the waters above the clouds, dispenses the measure of them, and causes them to descend at appointed times, to refresh the surface of the earth.

All the wonders which the universe exhibits are the consequences of the beautiful order which reigns throughout it; and this order has reigned uninterrupted during the long succession of the ages which have preceded us.

Where ORDER reigns, all is of perfect and unalterable beauty; where it does not, every thing is full of deformity, trouble, and confusion.

Is it not ORDER which teaches the animal creation the rules they observe so undeviatingly, respecting their food and their places of abode? Is it not from HIM who is the Sovereign Disposer of all things, and who governs the least as the greatest by the same sure and unchanging laws? We do not see the moon shine by day, nor the sun appear above the horizon in the night. “*The high hills,*” says the Psalmist, “*are a refuge for the wild goats, and the rocks for the conies.*”

“*He appointed the moon for seasons; the sun knoweth his going down.*”

“*Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.*”

“*The young lions roar after their prey; and do seek their meat from God.*”

“*The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.*”

*“Man goeth forth unto his work, and to his labour till the evening.”*

Thus passes our present life; the regulated alternations of it relieve its labours, and divert its inquietudes, and are the effect of the same admirable ORDER that reigns throughout nature.

It is ORDER which distinguishes us from other animals; which has built cities, established laws, annexed honours to virtues, punishments to crimes, invented the arts, formed marriages, united hearts by mutual affection, cemented human society, inspired parents with the tender love they feel for their children, and children with the reciprocal affection they entertain for those to whom they owe their birth; and, above all, it is ORDER which has kindled in our hearts the celestial fire of Divine love—that love so grand, so ennobling, so infinitely elevated above all things that belong only to mortality.

*On Moderation in Disputes.*

#### PREPARATION FOR THE MINISTRY.

THE Saviour was not baptized till the age of thirty years, immediately before entering on the office of his ministry. Was not this to teach us that, before we presume to take upon ourselves the government of others, we ought to be accustomed to obey with humility? that before we attempt to purify others, we should be purified ourselves? that we ought not to enter on the preaching of the Gospel, till we shall have obtained the age of maturity and perfection, as well for the strength of the body as the vigour of the mind? It ought to be a lesson to young men who presumptuously imagine that it is allowable, at any age, to take upon themselves the functions of the ministry and the authority of teachers. John, in his humility, hesitated to baptize Jesus Christ, though asked to do so by Him whose approach he

had heralded. "I have need to be baptized of Thee," said the light to the Sun, the voice to the Word; the greatest of prophets, "yea, and more than a prophet," who had led so austere a life of privation in the desert, who was in himself the appointed link between the Old Testament and the New, to Him whom the prophets had announced\*.

*On the Purification.*

#### PRESUMPTION OF IGNORANCE.

"ONE of the greatest evils that I have seen under the sun," says the prophet, "is a man that is wise in his own eyes;" but another evil, greater still, and more deplorable in its consequences, is a man without eyes, yet undertaking to conduct another,—a man so totally blind that he is not even conscious of his own want of sight. There is no greater obstacle to true excellence than presumption and vain-glory. Even when we have merit, if we nourish in ourselves the idea that we possess it, we run the risk of losing a great portion of it. If, therefore, to entertain a high opinion of ourselves be always dangerous, even to those who may be in some measure deserving of it, what must it be to those who have neither talents nor worth!

*On the Dignities and Duties of the Sacerdacy.*

#### READING OF THE SCRIPTURES.

IT was a law wisely established among the Hebrews, not to confide to all descriptions of persons the reading of the most profound and mysterious parts of the Holy Scriptures; for all not being capable alike of searching into the hidden sense

\* "There is not any thing," says Milner, "in which primitive piety appears to more advantage, when compared to modern religion, than in a review of men's conduct with respect to the pastoral office. In our time it frequently happens that youths, who have really a religious cast, fancy themselves adequate to the most important of all offices, before they have attained the age of twenty. Parents, also, too often look on

of these portions of the Inspired Writings, weak minds, who could only understand them according to their literal expression, might have found in them something at which to take offence. There were, therefore, certain portions of the Sacred Books, which were put into the hands of every one; being those in which the literal sense contained nothing but what might be useful to all: there were others, again, which, under familiar expressions, concealed profound mysteries, only to be penetrated by the most assiduous application, joined to the greatest purity of heart. These were only confided to such as had accomplished their twenty-fifth year. It was not thought that before this age a man could have acquired that elevation of thought and sentiment which raises him above what is terrestrial, and connected with the senses, and leads him from the simplicity of the letter, to the intelligence of the hidden sense concealed therein.

*On the Dignities and Duties of the Sacerdocy.*

#### SILENCE.

**SPEAK** only when you have any thing to say which it is desirable to communicate. You do not know what a great gift of God it is, not to be obliged to speak, and to know when to hold your tongue.

*On Moderation in Disputes.*

#### SOLITUDE.

**SOLITUDE** has always had the most powerful attractions for me, even from my earliest youth. At the moment, above all, that I was forced to tear myself from it, the calm delights I had tasted in its bosom seemed dearer than ever to my heart. I even found in it new charms, new attrac-

their dullest children as competent to the sacred function; and it is much to be feared that worldly lucre is the spring that animates many to press into the ministry, who never had any charity for their own souls."—*History of the Church of Christ*, vol. ii. p. 531, note.

tions, so lively, so powerful, that my soul, ravished and enchanted, could not resist their influence. Nothing indeed appears to me more delicious, more divine, than to pass one's days thus united to the Supreme Good, in retirement, far from the noise and agitations of an inconstant and vexatious world, free from all carnal affections and desires ! How dearly do I love to represent to myself a pious hermit, who has subjugated his senses to the dominion of reason ; who, though still confined to earth, yet stands on its outermost boundary ; and who, from day to day, affranchises himself from the ties by which he may be yet linked to human things ! Elevated above present and visible objects, breathing a life altogether spiritual, he has relinquished his commerce with men, and holds no more converse with them, except what the duties of charity, or the actual necessities of life may require. He communes with his own thoughts—he occupies himself with his God—he has neither voice nor language for any thing but to converse with Him, to bless and glorify Him. Solely bent on the discovery and contemplation of Eternal Truth, he catches it at intervals in characters of radiant light : and the sublime and lofty ideas which he conceives of its perfections remain imprinted in his mind, free from all the fugitive deceptive phantoms and shadows with which they would be obscured by earthly things. Thus he becomes, in the interior of his soul, as a mirror, in which God is pleased to reflect the rays of his divinity, and to manifest the splendours of his glory. Joined in this region of light and peace to blessed spirits, he maintains with them celestial intercourse, and feeds upon his grand and solid hopes of a future life. Already he considers himself as in possession of the ineffable delights of the heavenly kingdom. He still remains on earth, but he is elevated beyond it, by the noble and generous flight which his soul, supported by the Holy Spirit, directs to-

wards heaven. O happy fate, O tranquil blissful condition !—if there be any one who may have been smitten with the divine love, who may have tasted some of those purest of joys, he will comprehend all that I would say, and will pardon me the excess, the transports of the passion, with which my whole soul was inflamed and filled !

*On the Dignities and Duties of the Sacerdotal Character.*

#### SORROWS OF ACCUMULATING YEARS.

You interrogate me on the state of my affairs. They are, indeed, hapless—of Basil I am bereaved ; of Cæsarius I am bereaved. My brother in spirit, and my brother in the flesh. My father and my mother have departed from me ; my body is bent with sickness ; old age is on my brow ; cares perplex me ; anxieties distract me ; my friends are faithless, and the church is without a pastor. Joy is dead ; sorrow is young and vigorous. My voyage is in the night ; the storm is loud ; no beacon shines : Jesus sleeps. What am I yet to suffer. One only remedy presents itself to my afflictions, and that is death. But there is a world to come ; and at the nature of that world I tremble, instructed by the sufferings of the present.

*Letter to Eudoxius the Rhetorician.*

#### STATE OF THE BLESSED.

I AM persuaded by the reasoning of the wise, that every pure and holy spirit, when springing from its mortal tenement it journeys hence ; (instantaneously beholding, instantaneously apprehending the blessings that await it ; from material darkness purified, redeemed, resuscitated, and—oh ! that I had a word as towering as my ideas :) is thrilled with a wondrous, a surpassing joy, is enveloped in a blaze of ecstasy, and flies, enraptured flies, to the bosom of its Lord ; and there is overflowed with a torrent of

enjoyments; having escaped from this transient abode as from a dreary prison, having burst the fetters that enchain'd it, by which the wings of intellect were repressed; and a little after, again receiving its kindred body from the earth, which primarily gave it, and was afterwards intrusted with it, according to the ineffable operation of him who connected and disunited them, becomes its joint inheritor of celestial glory; and as it participated on earth in the sufferings of the body, by reason of their close alliance, so likewise now does it impart unto the body its inherent joys; and, transforming it to its own immortal nature, becomes with it one essence indivisible, one spirit, intellect, divinity; the seeds of corruption and of death being absorbed by the principle of life.

*Funeral Oration on Cæsarius, A. D. 368.*

#### STATE OF THE CLERGY.

ANOTHER reason of my flight, for with you, my brethren, I will have no concealments, but will lay open my whole heart without reserve, another reason was that I have continually been ashamed and put to the blush, by seeing the crowd of people, who, without merit, without talent, unruly and corrupt, presume, with sullied hands and a profane mind, to take upon themselves the august and holy functions of the sacred ministry. They who ought to tremble even at putting their feet across the consecrated threshold, shamelessly rush into the sanctuary which they are unworthy to approach. Spurred on by ambition, stimulated by avarice, they crowd around the sacred table, and push each other out of the way, to get nearer to it themselves. Blind to all that is dread and holy in this altar, destined to consecrate man to God, they see in it nothing but what may minister to their insatiable cupidity. To them the priesthood is not a laborious ministry, wherein



he who enters upon its duties must sacrifice every thing belonging to himself, for the members of the Church of Christ, of all and each of whom an exact account will one day be required of him: no, to them the priesthood is a title of honour, a rank conferring authority and power; wherein they claim the right to exercise an arbitrary empire, and not to be accountable for their actions, of whatever nature they may be: bold in every thing they do and suffer, where human glory or false honour is concerned, and cowardly only where the interests of God are in question:—burning, in short, with the desire of dominion, and of erecting themselves into masters one over the other; insomuch that we shall soon see the number of prelates exceed that of the inferior clergy, until they themselves find no one over whom to exercise their rule; for there will not be one left willing to remain in the same ranks with those humble disciples of the truth whom God himself enlightens and instructs, according to the promises he has made them by his prophets.

*Apology for declining the Sacerdotal Office.*

#### STUDENTS AT ATHENS.

AT Athens there is a passion for the sophists, which is carried to a pitch of delirium. The greater part of those who frequent their schools, not only young men of the lowest condition, but also those of the best families, become infected with it. All are mixed up together in one mass, without distinction or restraint. You might fancy yourself in the noise and uproar of the Circus, where crowds of spectators are all eagerness for the race. You see them waving backwards and forwards, clouds of dust rising above their heads; they rend the air with their shouts, they follow the motion of the riders with straining eyes, tracing their course with their fingers, which they agitate as if they were spurring

the flanks of the racers, although they are far from them; they dismount one after another, change at their pleasure the officers and the bounds, and the heats, and the stewards of the lists; and who are they, may we ask, that do all this?—An idle rabble, that have not the means of living from one day to another. This is an exact picture of the students of Athens, and of the manner in which they conduct themselves towards their masters, and those whom they imagine to be their rivals. Eager, whatever school they themselves adopt, to aggrandise the renown of that one above all others, they endeavour to swell the number of its disciples, and increase the income of its professors, by stratagems opposed to all order and decency. For this purpose, they lie in wait at gates and avenues, in the fields and solitary places; in distant provinces, indeed, in all parts of the country, to intercept every one they can find, and enlist them in their own factions and cabals. No sooner does a young man set his foot in Attica, than, immediately, whether he will or not, he sees himself at the mercy of whoever may be the first to lay hands upon him. The scene now becomes half serious, half ludicrous. It begins by his being taken to some one of the party who want to make him their prey, or to some of his friends, or relations, or countrymen; or, perhaps, to the house of the sophist, whose purveyors they may be, and who reckons on their success for his remunerations. Then it is who shall throw out the most taunts at the new comer, with the design, as it should seem, of lowering his pretensions, if he have any, or to make him feel his dependance upon them. In this attack, each displays, more or less happily, the resources of his mind and his character, according to the education he has received. Those who are unacquainted with this custom are alarmed, and take offence at it; those, on the contrary, who are aware of it, make a joke of it; for in all this preamble there is more of threat

than of any thing serious. After that, he is conducted with great pomp to the bath, through the market-place. The troop who compose the escort march, two and two, at equal distances. Arrived within sight of the bath, all at once, as if transported with a sudden fury, they set up a great shout. At this signal, which is heard far and near, every body stops; then, as if they were refused admittance, they knock violently at the gates, to intimidate the novice; at last, when they are opened, he is permitted to enter, and is left at liberty: when he comes out, he is considered as one of the initiated, and takes his rank among his comrades.

*Funereal Oration on Basil the Great, delivered  
at Cæsarea, A.D. 381.*

#### THE SPRING.

ALL nature now moves on in unison with our festivity, and rejoices in common with our joy. Behold the face of things. The queen of the seasons unfolds her pageantry to the queen of days, presenting, from her native store, whatever is most beauteous, whatever is most delightful. Now is the canopy of heaven cloudless; the sun rides higher in his course, raying out a more golden lustre; brighter is the circle of the moon, and purer the chorus of the stars; more pacific now, the waves murmur on the shore; the tempest is allayed; soft are the whispers of the breeze; genial is the earth to the opening flowerets, and grateful the flowerets to our eyes. Released from winter's tyranny, more limpid flow the fountains; in streams more copious, the rivers; gay is the blossom on the plant, and sweet the fragrance of the meadow; the herbage is cropped by the cattle, the lambs disport on the blooming plains.

The vessel, now, rides forth majestic from the harbour, accompanied with shouts, for the most part shouts of gratitude; and is winged with its sails. The dolphin glides on

the bosom of the waters, dashing the silvery foam around, and following, with alacrity, the mariner.

Now doth the husbandman prepare his implements of tillage, raising his eye to heaven, and invoking Him who makes the fruitage flourish. How jocund he leads his oxen to the yoke! How patiently he cuts the prolific furrow, while hope sits smiling on his countenance!

The shepherd and the herdsmen attune their reeds, meditating the rural strain, and revel with the Spring, in the grotto or the grove. The gardener now more anxiously tends his plants; the fowler renews his snare, inspects the branches, and curiously explores the flying of the bird. The fisherman sits on the summit of the rock, surveys the deep, and repairs his net.

Again the assiduous bee, spreading wide her wings, and ascending from the pine, demonstrates her native skill, skims o'er the meads, and rifles the flowers of their sweets. One labours at the honey-comb, constructing the cells, hexagonal and mutually opposed; while another lays up the delicious store, providing for him who builds her a habitation, refection sweet, and sustenance untoiled for. Oh! that we could resemble them; we, who have received so wondrous an example of industry and of wisdom! Again the bird fabricates his nest; and one returns, and another enters the new-formed mansion, while a third traverses the air, and bids the forest re-echo to his harmonies, and greets the passenger with a song.

Even the inanimate part of the creation hymns and glorifies its Maker with a silent homage. For every thing which I behold, I magnify my God, and thus their hymn, from whom I have derived my melody, becomes, my own. Now universal nature smiles, and every sense is welcomed to the banquet. And, now, the magnanimous steed, disdaining the confinement of his stall, and spurning the

fetters that impede him, bounds o'er the echoing plains, and displays his beauty in the flood\*.

*Discourse on Easter Sunday, April 16, A. D. 383.*

#### VARIETIES OF CHARACTER.

WE must not expect to find the same sentiments, the same character in any two individuals,—in men and in women,—in the young and in the old,—in the rich and in the poor,—in those who are in health and those who are in sickness,—those who are in joy and those who are in sorrow,—in those who command and those who obey,—in the learned and the ignorant,—the courageous and the pusillanimous,—in mild and even tempers, and in hasty and violent ones,—in those who acquit themselves faithfully of their duties, and in those who neglect them. In corporeal infirmities we do not prescribe the same remedies to all classes of patients. On the contrary, we are careful to study the temperament of each, and to examine into all the symptoms of his disorder; nor is it till after the most prudent precautions that we apply to the divers diseases which are presented to our consideration, the medicines that we may judge to be the most advisable, and the most safe. It is thus also that we should act in spiritual maladies. We should study, inquire into, and ascertain the nature of the evils, the mind, character, and disposition of the different individuals who may require our consolation and aid, and apply to each the remedies that we deem most fitting to render him permanent service.

*On the Dignities and Duties of the Sacerdotal Office.*

\* The exquisite imagery in the foregoing description is well calculated to waft the imagination to the classic shores of Greece. It has been adjudged second only to Virgil, and Mr. Boyd, from whose correct, yet animated translation it is taken, justly observes that it is still more remarkable to find a description so rich and vivid penned by Gregory, in declining age; at a period when his body was worn with penance, and fasting, and disease; and his mind had almost sunk beneath its accumulated afflictions.

## SAINT BASIL THE GREAT,

*ARCH-BISHOP OF CÆSAREA.*

BORN, 329 ; DIED, 379.

THIS illustrious friend of St. Gregory of Nazianzum was born at Cæsarea in Cappadocia, of noble parents, but who, happily for them, were much more distinguished for their Christian virtues than by their rank and wealth. During the persecutions of Maximin they abandoned their home and their elevated position in society, and, burying themselves in the forests of Pontus, spent seven years in their gloomy shades, exposed to continual privations, rather than yield up any point of their faith; which they preserved in all its primitive purity, amid the heresies and dissensions with which it had been visited during the preceding century. It was in these retreats that the infant Basil was imbued, from the earliest dawns of reason, with the principles of the Christian religion, which he imbibed from the lips of Basil, his father, and Emmeline, his mother, and also from Macrina, his grandmother, who, making him the object of all her tenderest cares, was indeed to him what Lois was to Timothy.

In reply to some imputations cast upon Basil, at a time when he ranked among the first teachers of

the Church, by his enemies, who were anxious to construe his charity for the errors of others into laxity of principle; "As to the purity of my faith," he says, "it may perhaps suffice to allege the advantage I have had in being brought up by my grandmother Macrina, of blessed memory. It was she who, from my cradle, as I may say, nourished me with the precepts of the soundest evangelical doctrines." \* \* \* And afterwards,—“I have many subjects of self-reproach, but, thanks to the grace of God, I have never given into any false doctrine, nor varied in my sentiments; having always preserved those which my blessed mother and my grandmother Macrina inspired in me: these good principles have developed themselves with my understanding as I have advanced in years, but the seed was sown in me in my earliest youth, and such as it was, such has it brought forth.”

Let all Christian mothers bear in mind so encouraging an example of the inestimable benefits they may confer upon their children, by imprinting on their yet ductile minds the characters which may hereafter make them wise unto salvation,—the principles which may make them heirs to eternal life!

As the youthful Basil advanced in years, his education was further promoted by his father, a man of rare merit, and distinguished for his learning as well as for his piety; but his chief desire was to make his son a faithful and enlightened Christian; and, after lavishing upon him, for nine years, all his ten-

derest cares in this respect, he sent him to finish his studies in the most celebrated schools of that time, first to Cæsarea in Palestine, then to Constantinople, and at last to Athens. At this latter place it was that he formed the friendship with Gregory of Nazianzum which at once proved the happiness and ornament of their future lives.

“How dear is Athens to my remembrance,” said Gregory more than thirty years after this period, when it was his sorrowful duty to make the funeral oration of his friend; “it was there that I learned really to know Basil, though he was already not unknown to me by reputation. I went there in search of science, and I found happiness. We soon became every thing to each other; the same roof sheltered as the same table served us; even the same thoughts occupied our minds. We pursued the sciences with equal ardour; we each sought success, that great object of jealousy among men, and yet envy was unknown between us. We disputed, we argued, not for the honour of pre-eminence, but for the pleasure of yielding it. It seemed as if our bodies were animated by the same soul. Our daily occupation was the practice of virtue, the care of living for our eternal hopes, and that of detaching ourselves from this world, before we should be called upon to quit it. Nothing was more noble in our eyes than the endeavour to exalt each other above material things, and increase our faith. We estranged ourselves from such of our fellow-students as were



irregular in their conduct or language, and associated only with those whose conversation might be profitable to us. Our feet were familiar with but two paths; one to the church, to hear the interpretation of the Holy Word, the other to the schools, where we listened to our masters. Spectacles, processions, and banquets, we abandoned to those who were unfortunate enough to take pleasure in them. The sole business of our existence, its most glorious prerogative in our eyes, was to be called Christians, and to be such."

Let it not be imagined that this early devotedness to a sacred cause engendered any thing of austerity or pride in these young men; no, the fruits of the Spirit are far different,—love, charity, gentleness, and peace: and so endeared were they to their associates by their demeanour, as well as by their virtues, that, as we have seen in the account St. Gregory has given of this period of his life, one general sentiment of grief was felt throughout the schools, when the time arrived which was to restore them to their paternal roofs: so lively indeed were the entreaties of their fellow-students for them to prolong their stay, that Gregory, yielding to them for a time, suffered his friend, who was anxious to return on account of his father, at that period in bad health, to depart without him. Basil was not, however, destined to have the consolation of seeing his revered parent, who, when he reached his home, was already no more.

Basil now established himself at Cæsarea in Cappadocia, in the profession of the bar. From his commencement the most brilliant success attended him; he began to feel the intoxication of worldly greatness; perhaps the applauses he had received at Athens had made more impression upon him than his friend Gregory, when age had shown him the vanity of them, was willing to acknowledge; however that might be, his conscience warned him of his danger, his integrity urged him to retreat from it. Happily, his mother and sister, devout, humble, sincere, strengthened him in all his good resolutions; he felt that it was impossible to serve God and Mammon, and, alarmed at the ascendancy the world was beginning to gain over him, he resolved at once to break the chains to which he was gradually accustoming himself. "I awoke," says he, in a letter to Eusebius, at that time Bishop of Sebaste in Armenia, "as if from a heavy sleep, and I shed torrents of tears on the life that I had been leading." He looked back upon the days of his comparative innocence at Athens, with all the bitterness of regret mingled with self-reproach: he recollected how often he and his friend Gregory had, in their happiest moments, planned together a life of seclusion in the deserts; where, amid the solitude and magnificence of nature, they could devote themselves entirely to God, and his short experience of the dangers of the world revived his desire to withdraw himself from its snares. He sighed for retirement,

but, taught by experience to distrust himself, he dreaded loneliness: Gregory, who would gladly have shared his retreat, was retained by sacred duties in the bosom of his family; he therefore resolved to call a few friends around him, of sentiments similar to his own, and to fix himself, with them, in the same umbrageous solitudes where he had passed his earliest years, and where his heart was first impressed with the sacred doctrines of Christianity.

Previous to taking this step, he visited the most celebrated solitaries and monastic institutions of the East and of Egypt, in order to gather from them all that might enable him better to regulate his own little flock, and promote their future edification. He then returned, and calling his friends together, they took up their abode in Pontus, among the mountains, on one side of the river Isis, whilst his mother and sister, accompanied by a small train of their own sex, of equal piety, established themselves on the other, the tract they inhabited being the property of the family.

It was at this period a very usual thing to see whole families distinguished by their religious zeal and the purity of their lives, and strengthening each other by their examples in their Christian course. Several brothers were often ordained at the same time, and priests were succeeded in their office by their children, as in the tribe of Levi. The family of Basil, in particular, were so remarkable for their piety, that they were termed "a colony of saints"

long before they made any absolute renunciation of the world. His brother Gregory was Bishop of Nyssa, his brother Peter, born just before his father's death, and most affectionately reared by his eldest sister Macrine, was Bishop of Sebaste, and his brother Naucratus, called from earth in the bloom of life, was equally assiduous, the short time he was permitted to remain on it, in the cultivation of the Christian virtues.

From the bosom of his retreat one of Basil's earliest cares was to write to his friend Gregory, to whom he thus describes it: "What we have often taken pleasure in picturing together in imagination, it is at length granted me to see in reality. Imagine to yourself a high mountain clothed with a thick forest, watered on the north by fresh and limpid streams; at the foot of this mountain is spread a plain perpetually fertilized by the waters which fall from the surrounding heights, whilst the forest, encircling it with trees of every variety, self-planted, in all the wildness of nature, serves it at once as a boundary and a defence. The island of Calypso would appear nothing after it, though Homer did admire it, above all others, for its beauty. The place is divided into two deep valleys; on one side the river, which precipitates itself from the peak of the mountain, forms a long barrier in its course, difficult to surmount; and on the other the wide ridge of the mountain, which communicates with the valley only by a few winding intricate paths, shuts out all

passage,—there is but one means of access, and of that we are the masters. My dwelling is built on one of the slopes of the mountain, the extremity of which juts out like a promontory. From it I survey the opening plain, and follow the course of the river, more delightful to me than the Strymon is to the inhabitants of Amphipolis; the still and lazy waters of the Strymon, indeed, scarcely deserve the name of a river: but this, the most rapid I have ever seen, breaks against the rocks, and, thrown back again by them, falls headlong into foaming waves, and precipitates itself into the deep gulf below; affording at once a most delightful spectacle, and an abundant supply of food, for there is an astonishing quantity of fish in its waters. Shall I speak of the fragrant dews of the earth, the freshness which exhales from the river? Another would describe the variety of the flowers, and the songs of the birds, but to these I have no leisure to pay attention. What I have to say the best of all of the spot is, that, along with the abundance of every thing, it affords likewise, what is to me the sweetest of all,—and that is tranquillity. It is not only far removed from the noise of cities, but it is not even visited by travellers, except sometimes by a few hunters who come among us; for we also have our wild beasts: not the bears and wolves of your mountains, but troops of stags, herds of wild goats, hares, and other animals as inoffensive. Pardon me, then, for having flown to this asylum; Alcmeon himself

stopped when he came to the islands of the Echinades."

It is not, however, change of place that can immediately give change of heart; and Basil, with his characteristic frankness, acknowledged to the same dear friend, who knew alike his virtues and his weaknesses, that he found it more difficult to effect this than he had imagined.

"I recognise," says he, "in the sentiments of your letter the hand which has traced them, as in looking at a child, we are reminded of its parents by a family likeness. You write to me that the place I have chosen for my retreat makes no difference to you: that all you desire is to know my mode of life, that you may come and join me in it. Such a thought is every way worthy of one like yourself, who annexes no importance to the things of this world, in comparison with the beatitudes which are promised us in the next. 'How do I pass,' you ask, 'my days and nights in the retirement in which I am now living?' Must I tell you? Alas! it will not be without confusion. I have left cities and their turmoil behind me. I have renounced every thing in them without regret, but I have not yet been able to renounce myself. I compare myself to voyagers who have not got accustomed to the sea, and to whom the motion of the vessel imparts the most uncomfortable sensations, because, in quitting land, they still bring on board with them the bile with which their stomach was overloaded. This is exactly the

state in which I am. As long as ever we carry about with us the germs of the maladies that torment us, the place makes no difference: we shall find every where the same sorrowful results. I will confess to you, then, that I have not yet experienced any great benefit from my solitude. What, then, is to be done, and how, then, ought we to act, in order to follow faithfully in the steps of the Master who has opened to us the way of salvation, saying, '*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*' Thus it is that we must act; we must, in the first place, labour to keep our minds in a calm and uniform consistency. When the eyes are accustomed to wander about in all directions, it becomes impossible to fix them on any object so stedfastly as to consider it under every point of view; yet we must look at it earnestly, to make it out entirely. It is the same with the mind; when it is divided by the solicitudes of the world, it cannot concentrate its attention upon the determinate nature of truth \* \* \* \*. What I mean by the expression to renounce the world, is not merely to remove the body to a distance from it, but to detach all our affections from it; to relinquish country, home, society, business, interests, human sciences: absolutely to divorce ourselves from all, in order that our souls may be entirely at liberty to receive the impressions the Lord may be pleased to make upon them. We cannot imprint new characters upon wax, till after we shall have effaced the old

ones: in the same manner the divine instructions cannot find place in a heart pre-occupied by all the ideas connected with the usual affairs of life.

“One of the first benefits to be derived from retirement is the imposing silence on the disorderly movements of our own hearts, and affording the calm to reason, that is necessary to enable us to conquer our passions, which, like ferocious beasts, are only to be subjugated by being bowed under the yoke. Let us, then, suppose a solitude such as the desert in which I now am; far from the commerce of mankind, where the pious exercises of a religious life, being uninterrupted by outward things, afford continual nourishment to the soul. Can you imagine a felicity more desirable than that of imitating on earth that life which the angels lead in heaven? To commence the day with prayers and sacred melodies, which bring us into immediate communication with our Creator; continuing it by the same exercises, mingling with our labour the holy songs which give it its sweetest relish, and diffuse such delicious consolations over the soul as constantly keep it in a state of ravishing serenity? It is by this majestic equilibrium in the movements of the soul, that we are purified; by not permitting the tongue to indulge in idle conversation; the eyes to dwell on the vain glory of mere outward things; the ears to introduce to the soul any thing of effeminacy or frivolity, mere mundane music, or the heartless jests of trifling minds.



“The soul, secured by these precautions from exterior diversion, and the attacks of the senses, retires within itself, and elevates its own nature to the contemplation of the Deity. Enlightened by the rays which shine forth from his Divine essence, it rises above its own weakness; freed from temporal cares, corporeal necessities, and affections of earth, it devotes all its powers to the search after immortal good, and makes its sole occupation to consist in the practice of temperance, prudence, fortitude, justice,—in a word, of all the virtues that compose the code of Christian morality.

“The surest way to understand thoroughly all that is required of us, is to meditate upon the Holy Scriptures, which bring before our eyes at once the precepts necessary for the direction of our conduct, and the examples of virtue best calculated to serve us as models. \* \* \* \* These meditations ought to be succeeded by prayer, which strengthens the energy of the soul, by the flame of divine love it kindles in it: prayer also diffuses light over the mysteries of the Divine Essence. Prayer makes the soul the residence of God Himself, by filling its intelligence and perceptions with a profound impression of His presence: it makes the Christian a temple of the Divinity; a sanctuary which neither the cares nor the revolutions that agitate the world, nor the lawless affections which make all our misery, dare venture to approach: separated from every thing beside, it then communes only with God.

“One of the first objects of our care in a religious community ought to be so to regulate our conversation, as to contract the habit of proposing questions to each other, without any mixture of a disputatious spirit; and of giving our answers without any pretension to superiority; never to interrupt any one who may be speaking of something useful,—to refrain from endeavouring to shine in conversation; to love to learn, without feeling humbled by our need of learning; to impart what we know, without suffering our vanity to be gratified by imparting it, and without hiding from ourselves or others the source whence we may have derived our information, but always making known, with gratitude, to whomsoever we may be indebted for it. The sound of the voice should also be attended to, that we may draw neither too much, nor too little attention by it. Let us always reflect well on what we are going to say, before we give it utterance; let us show ourselves polite, attentive, affectionate in our language, but let us not lend our ears to any thing of light or foolish jesting,—let us, on the contrary, mildly check, by friendly remonstrance, those who may be in the habit of indulging in it. We ought never to allow ourselves any harshness, either of manner or tone, even to recall to duty those who may have suffered themselves to wander from it. Always in matters of exhortation place yourself in the lowest place: you are sure by that means to gain him who may have need of your advice. In such cases we

cannot do better than take for our model the prophet, who, charged with the rebuking of David in his sin, does not pronounce, in his own person, the sentence of condemnation on him, but borrowing the character of a stranger, in which to make his appeal to the king's individual judgment, leaves him, when he pronounces sentence against him, no plea for complaint against his accuser."

With what humility does he also express himself on the same subject to his friend Amphilochus:—"I have indeed renounced the world," he says, "as far as withdrawing myself from communication with it may be to renounce it; but I feel that the man of the world still lives in me. You know I have practised at the bar, hence I have contracted a habit of speaking too much. I am not sufficiently on my guard against the thoughts which the evil one suggests to me; I find difficulty in relinquishing the favourable opinion I had entertained of myself,—in a word, my whole soul has need of being renewed and purified, before I can contemplate, without impediment, the wonders and glory of my God."

It was nevertheless with inward and sweet consolation that Basil began to see, in the way of life he had embraced, the means afforded him of gradual approach to that regenerated state which was the object of all his most ardent desires.

"It is certain," says he, again addressing his friend Gregory, "that retirement from the world affords great assistance towards the attainment of this end:

it calms and subdues the passions, and gradually induces a habit of sacred meditation."

At a future period, when he found himself more and more strengthened in his renunciation of every thing that had formerly tended to engender in him a vain-glorious spirit and worldly desires, he was enabled to write thus to Eusebius :

"I have lost much time from having spent my youth in the study of vain sciences, and the acquirement of that worldly wisdom which is foolishness in the sight of God ; but now these wretched illusions are dispersed ; I deplore the uselessness of my past life ; I see the emptiness of the acquirements which serve no other end than to inflate us with vain-glory, and the wonderful light of the Evangelists is become my sole treasure. It was indeed incumbent upon me to reform my habits, which retained but too much of the long commerce I had had with the children of this world."

The more Basil advanced in Christian perfection, the more desirous he was to associate his beloved friend Gregory in his spiritual labours, and at length he had the happiness of embracing him, of welcoming him to his retreat, of seeing him at his side in prayer, in study, in occupation ; renewing thus the enjoyments of their youth, when, corrected by experience, they had no fear of falling again into its errors. The study of the Holy Scriptures became their most cherished labour ; they prayed together for understanding to behold the wondrous things contained in

them, and for grace to profit by the precepts and conditions held out in them; and mindful of the labours of their pious predecessors in the same field, they studied assiduously their commentaries, and particularly those of Origen, from which they made a selection together, entitled "Philocalia."

Thus passed their peaceful days; in a small circle of chosen friends, who looked up to them as their teachers; amid the consolations of prayer, the melody of psalms, meditation on the Divine Word, the study of religious works, offices of charity to each other, and the manual labours which ministered at the same time to health, cheerfulness, and utility; affording an example of monastic life in its original purity, equally removed from the fanatical rigours and the imbecile quietude which many, of the Egyptian monks more especially, fell into.

This period passed too quickly for those to whom it was so fraught with instruction and delight. The parents of Gregory were saddened by the absence of a son whose virtues were the pride and consolation of their old age; they entreated him to return, and he felt it his duty, as he has himself related, to conform to their desire; but the effort that it cost him is sufficiently evident in the letter he wrote to Basil shortly after their separation:—"Who can supply to me," says he, "our sacred songs, our holy vigils, our transports towards God, our contemplations lifted above things of sense and matter? why can I not still see with my own eyes the affecting unity of

our brethren, their generous emulation in the race of faith, their inviolable attachment to the discipline which it was our care to secure to them by stated rules? With what pleasure, mingled with regret, do I call to mind our assiduity in the study of the Divine Writings, and the lights which the Holy Spirit, the guide of our pious labours, deigned to award to us in the elucidation of them! If I descend to inferior things, where shall I find again our daily yet varied occupations? shall I never more see myself laying stones, carrying wood, planting, watering, digging, as occasion called for, but yet always with thee at my side? Alas! in vain I form wishes to myself, they do not restore what I have lost; but thou, O my friend, at any rate, wilt not abandon me! O, watch, thyself, over the sacred fire which thou hast kindled in my soul, and obtain for me, by thy prayers, that it shall not be weakened or extinguished by any want of perseverance on my part."

What a picture of true attachment do these lines afford! Whilst thousands of friendships, falsely so called, founded on no other basis than worldly interests, or participation in senseless or guilty pleasures, answer no end but to draw down those who form them deeper into condemnation, such ties as those which bound these holy men on earth, unite them still closer in heaven, where the tranquillity of eternal duration is added to the delight of entire comprehension of each other.

The number of St. Basil's disciples augmenting

every day, he committed his rules for their conduct to writing, under the title of "Principal and Minor Regulations;" he likewise instructed and exhorted, by letter, those of his acquaintance, friends, or fellow-labourers in the Church, who might be under circumstances of trial or affliction. Many of these letters remain to us, and are models of zeal tempered with charity; fearless in rousing the sinner to repentance, and exhibiting the greatest humility when he comes to compare the spiritual state of others with his own. At the end of five years Basil was prevailed on to place his little flock under the care of his brother Peter, and to leave his retreat, at the solicitation of Diacre, Bishop of Cæsarea, who, being on his death-bed, longed to see him once more, and to hear again from his mouth the promises of the Gospel, which he was so soon to claim in another world.

On the death of Diacre, Eusebius was called to his place. He was a man of consideration in society, who had adopted Christianity only a short time before, and was not then even baptized. Such a person was ill calculated to oppose the persecutions with which the Christians were at that time threatened by Julian the Apostate, just then come to the throne, and by the intrigues of the Arians, fomented as they were by the insidious devices of that prince. In this perplexity he cast his eyes on Basil, and prudently resolved to strengthen his own influence by the aid of one so justly held in esteem; he therefore raised

him to the priesthood in spite of his entreaties to be allowed to return into retirement, and confided to him the ministry of the Word. Gregory wrote to him on hearing of his ordination, to offer him, not his congratulations, but his condolences. "We have both of us," says he, "been made priests against our inclinations; perhaps it might have been better for us never to have been raised to the sacerdotal office. This, however, is all that I will say on the subject; for I am fully conscious what have been the views of God respecting us. Since our lot is cast, it is our duty to submit ourselves to it; above all, on account of the times in which we live, when the tongues of heretics are let loose against us on every side, and to do nothing which may fall below either the hopes that are conceived respecting us, or the life which we have hitherto led."

Notwithstanding the reluctance with which Saint Basil undertook the sacerdotal office, when he had once entered upon the duties of it, he acquitted himself of them with an activity equal to his zeal. Besides the regular labours of his office, he every morning and evening instructed the poorer inhabitants of Cæsarea in his beautiful Homilies on the six days of the Creation, known collectively by the title of the "*Hexameron*." In these homilies, elevating the minds of his auditors to the love of God, through the admiration of his works, he explained to them the order and government of the material world, its productions, the rotation of the seasons, and of the



heavenly bodies, the instincts of animals, the nature of man and of his destiny, the attributes of the soul, and other topics calculated equally to delight and to instruct. To the variety of his information, and the justness of his arguments, he added all the charms of eloquence, enriched by his ardent feelings and an imagination which delighted in the picturesque. "If ever," he exclaims, in one of his discourses, "in the serenity of the night, whilst gazing attentively on the inexpressible beauty of the stars, you have thought of the Creator of all things, if you have ever asked yourselves whose hand it is that has sown the heavens with such flowers; if, during the day, you have ever considered the wonders of the light, and if you have raised your thoughts from visible things to the invisible, then you are prepared to become a spectator of His works, and may take your place in the magnificent amphitheatre that He has erected. Come, then, and I will lead you by the hand, as we conduct strangers newly arrived in a place, to show you the wonders of this great city of the universe." Thus beautifully and affectionately did he exhort the mechanics and workmen, and even women and children, who crowded round him at such hours as they could spare from their diurnal occupations; sometimes melting into tears as they listened to him, and at others interrupting him, according to the custom of the time, with loud acclamations of applause; for, as his brother Gregory of Nyssa, who often made one of his admiring audience, has admir-

ably said, "The simplest could comprehend his discourses, whilst the wisest admired them." Nor was he less eloquent in his recommendation of all the duties of morality and benevolence; in his pictures of the vanities of earthly joys, and of the pure felicity of a religious life. Eager alike to solace and to convert, he seemed at once to fix his eyes on heaven, and extend his hands towards the unfortunate on earth, joining the most active services to the sublimest instructions.

But, alas, for human nature! too soon were the labours of Basil interrupted by the jealousy of the very man who ought most to have rejoiced in their success. The coldness with which he began to be treated by the bishop, Eusebius, in proportion as he gained the esteem of every other person he was brought in contact with, soon became too evident not to attract the notice of both friends and enemies, inspiring grief in one, malevolent satisfaction in the other. To avoid all occasion of scandal and of party-spirit, which was beginning to break forth in every direction, in consequence of this humiliating betrayal of self-love on the side of Eusebius, Basil took the part of a wise man and a sincere Christian; leaving out of the question all other considerations but those which involved the honour of his cause and the peace of his people, he forbore to defend himself, forbade his friends to take his part, and quietly retraced his steps to his beloved seclusion, where he calmly spent three more years, a part of which time was cheered

by the society of his friend Gregory, in which he found ample indemnification for all that he had given up, in the spirit of humility and peace.

Eusebius, however, was soon made sensible of the error he had committed in parting with Basil ; he saw his church threatened on every side, under the administration of Valentius, by an army, as Gregory has forcibly described it, worthy of such a chief ; ready to commit any atrocity ; by bishops without piety, and by governors of provinces without humanity. In this critical moment, all eyes were turned towards Basil in retreat, and even Eusebius himself acknowledged that, without him, he was unable to struggle against the wolves of heresy and oppression, which were watching to ravage his flock. "It required," says Gregory, "no long arguments to prevail on him to come to our aid. I it was, who was charged by Eusebius to bear to him the unanimous wish of the people for his return. As soon as he beheld me, without one moment's hesitation, he prepared to quit Pontus immediately, and to follow me ; he saw nothing but the fact that the Church was endangered by tyranny ; he had no other feeling than the desire to support it, and to devote himself unconditionally to its service."

The conduct of Basil, on this occasion, shows how easily a man who has learned to subjugate himself may acquire over others the influence which he seeks only for their good. The misunderstandings, quarrels, strifes, and resentments, which form so

large a part of the discomforts of the world, would never endure so long, and break out again so often, like smothered volcanoes, with increased fury, if the faults on both sides were not nearly equal,—in the case of Eusebius and Basil, they were but on one; and hence it was that peace was restored between them, the moment that the offending party held out his hand in signal of it to him, who, in his own person could not be offended: so closely did he follow his Master's rule—"Bless them that curse you—do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

Eusebius found the reward of that acknowledgment of error which is often the only atonement that can be made for it. Basil was continually at his side, foreseeing every thing he ought to do; anticipating every thing he desired; solacing the infirmities of his age, strengthening him in his faith, and animating him in his duties; doing it all, likewise, in so affectionate and unassuming a spirit as to soothe Eusebius with the idea that the good emanated from himself; thus begetting in him, at length, the desire to do that for its own sake, which before he only felt it advisable to seem to do for the benefits that might result from it.

Nor was Basil less successful with the people than with their bishop; "nothing could equal his zeal and courage," says Gregory, describing him at this juncture, "excepting his prudence and profound

wisdom ; he knew, at once, how to regain the affection of his people, put an end to the disputes which divided even the orthodox, and separate from them those who were inimical to the truth. Every where was he seen joining himself to the strong, supporting the weak, and repulsing their adversaries, who were obliged, at length, to retire without gaining a single advantage over them."

Being thus brought once more, by the decrees of Divine Providence, into the crowded haunts of men, Basil's desire to be useful seemed to increase in proportion to the extent of the field for his exertions. One of his most powerful gifts was the eloquence with which he pleaded the cause of the poor. No one ever better understood how to lay the foundation of equality in society, by the aid of religious charity ; and well might he claim that from others, of which he gave a perfect example in his own person ; having distributed at different times, the whole of his patrimony among the necessitous ; literally retaining not for himself "two coats"—insomuch that he was often obliged to the cares of his friends for the supply of his own wants. The circumstances of the times soon after his return to Cæsarea in 367 afforded but too much occasion for the strongest exercise of all his powers of persuasion. Cappadocia was at that period a prey to one of the most cruel famines that had been known in the history of man ; Cæsarea in particular, was desolated by it, and hopelessly so, as its distance from the sea entirely ex-

cluded it from foreign succour; to add to which many of the rich, among its own inhabitants, had the barbarous avarice to increase its misery by buying up the provisions that remained, and retaining them in the hope of making an enormous profit on them, at the moment when the necessities of the unfortunate inhabitants should be at the last pitch of despair. At a juncture so appalling, Basil even surpassed himself: the compassionate melted into tears as they yielded to his entreaties; the obdurate quaked as they listened to his denunciations. They unlocked their granaries, whilst his thunders still sounded in their ears: the poor were fed, and Basil, assisted by associates of piety and zeal congenial to his own, regulated the distribution of their stores with his own hands, and watched over their necessities, and ministered to their spiritual wants at the same time that he provided for those of their bodies.

The following year another of these awful visitations occurred, by which the Almighty, full of mercy even in his chastisements, reminds us of the infinite importance of things eternal, compared to things of temporal duration. The city of Nicia was overthrown by an earthquake, and nearly all the inhabitants perished. Among those who were buried beneath the ruins was, as we have before stated, Cæsarius, the brother of Gregory, and as such, as well as on account of his own merit, one of Basil's most beloved friends. He had extricated

himself from this living tomb, as if by miracle, and, full of gratitude for his preservation from such a frightful death, he had dedicated himself with increased ardour to the service of Him who had heard his cry when "the earth trembled and shook," and when he was "counted with them that go down unto the pit." These good resolutions Basil sought to strengthen by earnestly exhorting him, in a letter he sent him shortly after his deliverance, never to lose sight of the situation in which he had been placed, and of his first feelings on being rescued from it. "Oh! that we could always," says he, "retain the sentiments by which we are animated in times of danger and trial;—then it is that we are indeed fully impressed with a conviction of the nothingness of this life, the uncertainty of all worldly things, the folly of those who attach themselves to them: then it is that we deplore our past errors; that we form new resolutions to watch more narrowly over ourselves for the future, and to consecrate ourselves afresh and entirely to the Lord. Such are the sentiments you have no doubt experienced on your late deliverance. Look upon yourself, then, for the future, as a man charged, if ever there was one, with an immense and most sacred debt. I suggest these considerations to you, with mixed emotions of thankfulness for the past, and solicitude for the future: excuse my frankness. I well remember you used to like me to hold such language as this, with you, and I am willing to

flatter myself that it will not at this time find you less disposed to listen to it favourably."

It is exhortations such as these, that turn the biography of the wise and good into the most wholesome lessons of instruction, conveyed under the most pleasing forms. To read their lives merely for the incidents they may contain, or the connexion they may have had with the general history of their times, is to raise them but little above the dignity or utility of romance; but when we reflect upon the circumstances in which they were placed, as being, either in fact, or liability, common to us all; when we apply their examples to ourselves, and endeavour to borrow wisdom from their precepts, and to regulate our conduct by theirs, in similar cases, then it is that the full value of truth and reality is felt; then it is that being dead, they yet speak, and speak in language the more sacred, as succeeding centuries have only served to attest its wisdom. Oh, if indeed we could retain, when our afflictions are overpast, the humble appreciation of ourselves, the contrite acknowledgment of our unworthiness, the submissive reliance on the mercy of Him who sends the trials, which makes them such holy purifiers of our nature, how nearly should we resemble what we were meant to be, or rather how nearly should we regain all that we have lost! But, alas! in our health we forget that we have ever been sick, and that others still remain so. In our abundance we forget that others are destitute; in our resentments that we ourselves, every moment, have need of forgiveness!



In 370 Basil was raised to the Episcopacy by the death of Eusebius, whose place he was called upon to fill. The times were full of anarchy and dissension. The disputes of the Arians, and other heretical sects, had taught even the orthodox the sorrowful habit of disputing among each other; instead of illustrating their faith by their works, they were arguing upon abstruse points of it, which had nothing to do with their modes of life, and which only exposed them to the scoffs of unbelievers, by the varying opinions they elicited. Basil laboured with his utmost energy to repress a spirit so injurious to the general interests of the Church, and the individual character of its members. He wrote letters to the different churches, he sent ministers among them; he preached tolerance and gentleness on all minor points; he insisted only on implicit submission to those immediately connected with the Divine Majesty of God, as manifested in his incarnation in Jesus Christ, and tried every means of bringing back to the simple paths of Gospel purity those who had weakened their faith and hopes in the labyrinths of metaphysical subtleties.

The Emperor Valentius, the arbitrary champion of Arianism, fearing these united efforts of firmness and conciliation in a man of Basil's extraordinary powers, sent the Prefect Modestus to Cæsarea, with orders to bring him into his presence.

"Explain your conduct," said the Prefect, to the pious pastor, as soon as he saw him; "how is it that

you oppose your will to that of your prince, and presume to resist him with so much insolence?"

"I am not aware that I have deported myself with insolence towards the Emperor," replied Basil.

"Have you not refused to embrace the religion he professes, when every one else has hastened to obey him?"

"A greater Master has forbidden me to do so!"

"What are we then in your eyes? Are those who announce to you the orders of a prince nothing? Would it be no honour for one like you to be ranked with us?"

"Your dignity is great, I acknowledge, but God ought to be obeyed before all things. It would be sweet to me to be in communion with the humblest of those over whom you may be in command. The glory of a Christian is in his faith, not in his titles."

At these words, the Prefect indignantly rose from his seat, and exclaimed, in a voice of thunder,

"How! are you not afraid of incurring my resentment—of feeling the effects of my power?"

"What harm can you do me?"

"I have a thousand means of overwhelming you."

"What are they?"

"What? Confiscation—exile—torture—death."

"None of these can affect me."

"How? I understand you not."

"Can he who possesses nothing, be afraid of confiscation? these poor garments and a few books are

all that I have in the world: I feel assured you do not covet them. You threaten me with exile,—but to what place? Is not the earth the Lord's? Can I be sent to any, the remotest corner of it, where I shall not still be as his guest, as a traveller in his domains? Neither can tortures alarm me, for I hold to life with so feeble a breath, that it will expire in the first pang of suffering. And as to death itself, that would, indeed, be my greatest benefit: it would unite me sooner to my God, for whom alone I live, after whom I sigh, and whom I burn with impatience to rejoin."

The Prefect was amazed. "Never before," said he, "has any one spoken to me thus."

"Then you have never before conversed thus with a Christian bishop," replied Basil; "for to such menaces a true minister of Jesus Christ would invariably make the same answers. In all other things you will find us the most mild, the most accommodating among men; we carefully guard against the least appearance of haughtiness, even towards the obscurest citizen, still more so with respect to those who are invested with sovereign authority; but the moment that the cause of God is concerned, we despise every thing; glittering swords, burning braziers, famished tigers, and all the apparatus of the most cruel tortures are alike insignificant in our eyes. Exhaust all your threats, have recourse to all your barbarities; make use of all your authority, call the Emperor himself to your aid, you will never

conquer our firmness,—you will never persuade us to subscribe to the doctrines of impiety, even were your threats a thousand times more terrible.”

After this conversation, the Prefect felt convinced that no arguments he could use would be of sufficient force to subdue such heroic courage; he therefore suffered Basil to depart, and could not refrain, in taking leave of him, from testifying his respect for his principles. On his return to the Emperor, “Prince,” said he to him, “we are vanquished: the bishop of Cæsarea is one of those men whom threats cannot terrify, arguments convince, nor promises seduce.” The Emperor was wise enough to forbear to resort to violence with such an adversary, and, perhaps, generous enough to admire the very integrity he had hoped to corrupt: Basil was therefore left in peace, as far as his own personal safety, and that of the people immediately under his care was concerned. The persecutions, however, to which the surrounding churches were exposed, was a subject of great affliction to him, particularly as a grievous state of health, which frequently confined him to his bed, prevented him from offering them his condolences and exhortations, except by letter; but among these, his epistles “to the Faithful of Alexandria, Antioch, and Neocæsarea,” “to the Clergy of the Church of Tarsus,” and “to the Religious under persecution by the Arians,” will always remain monuments of his Christian zeal and fraternal love. Nor was he without trials in his own affections,—the

death of his excellent mother was one, in particular, which he severely felt. "I have lost," says he, in a letter to Eusebius, bishop of Samosata, "the first joy of my life,—I have lost my mother. Do not accuse me of weakness in deploring, at my age, this event, as lacerating to my heart. Oh! do not condemn me for regretting the removal of a person whose place no other in this world can ever supply to me, and alas! whom no other person will ever resemble in my eyes."

It is affecting to see such warmth of natural feeling, such filial tenderness, in one who could confront exile, imprisonment, and death itself, without either fear or regret; but the same tenderness of nature was doomed to be severely tried, by the dissensions and intrigues, which even those who called themselves his friends sometimes suffered themselves to take part in against him; attacking his faith under pretence that his Christian charity degenerated into indifference, because he was unwilling to tax the consciences of the weak with dogmas respecting mysteries which would no doubt have been rendered easier of comprehension to us all, had the exact knowledge of them been necessarily connected with our eternal interests. To complete his chagrins, a cloud at this time obscured his friendship with Gregory, who had hitherto partaken of all his griefs, and consoled him under them. We have already stated that Basil, having increased the number of bishoprics in his diocese, appointed Gregory to one

at Suzima; and we have seen, in the description he has given of the place, how utterly uncongenial it was to the tastes of Gregory, conscious, as he could not but be, that his powers fitted him for a wider field of action. Basil, however, unswayed by any private feelings when his public duties were in question, insisted the more that he should accept it, reminding him, that wherever there were souls to lead in the paths of salvation, the office of their pastor ought to be deemed by him sufficiently sacred and ennobling to reconcile him to it, wherever it might be cast.

For a time, then, the two friends were estranged from each other, but they came together again, as Christians, with renewed love; and thus candidly and honourably does Gregory afterwards acquit the man, whom he had all his life revered, from blame, in a matter where it can be no injustice to either to suppose that each might err, as both were human. "I shall only say," says he, "to the honour of Basil, that his thoughts were elevated far above common thoughts, that in all things he conducted himself solely by the directions of the Holy Spirit, and that, whilst he acquitted himself with admirable exactness of all the duties of friendship, he always held them subordinate to the interests of his Divine Master."

Let us now, however, turn from the recital of these trials and griefs, with which the good seem destined more especially to be purified, "as fine gold in the crucible," and contemplate some of the holy joys which at times consoled them, either in their

own sacred communings with God, or in their labours of love towards their fellow-creatures. From this last source the active charity of Basil enabled him to draw largely, but in no instance more than in the complete success of one of the greatest undertakings of benevolence that was ever accomplished by an individual, who in himself possessed no resources but what his faith, his piety, and his eloquence, gave him in the hearts of others,—we mean the noble hospital known afterwards by the name of the Basiliad, the first institution in the world of its kind; which he founded at Cæsarea, some years after the famine that had desolated it, before he entered upon his episcopacy. This immense establishment, or rather, as Gregory expresses it, this “new city, raised on the confines of the old,” was open to every description of human misery and necessity; in it all the infirmities and accidents to which our material nature is liable were carefully attended to; medical attendants, nurses, guides for the blind, the crippled, and the aged, were attached to it; and, in the true spirit of Christian charity, spacious apartments were added expressly for the lepers, who, till then chased from place to place, and even driven out of all human haunts, found there the attentions and solace which their peculiar affliction so earnestly called for. Here, likewise, strangers were received with brotherly cordiality, and treated with liberal though simple hospitality. Careful, at the same time, that a charity meant for the amelioration of the human race should

in no way be suffered to minister to its corruptions, Basil provided spacious rooms and workshops for different handicrafts and mechanical occupations, where all who were desirous of employment could obtain it; and where those who might be able were required to add their quota, towards the funds of which they were reaping the benefits; for he knew the human heart too well not to dread the evils of idleness; aware that nothing injures moral integrity so soon as a willingness to live in a state of indolence, dependent on the exertion of others. "Happy is he who supports his neighbour," says St. Ambrose; "but woe unto him who needlessly allows his neighbour to support him."

It may easily be imagined what wonderful exertions it required on the part of one man, to procure funds for the raising and providing for such an immense establishment; nevertheless, Basil had the satisfaction to see the edifice begun and terminated, and the object of it fully answered; and it was the sweetest solace of his many cares to visit it perpetually, and to teach its inmates to bless the Giver of all Good, who had thus raised up an asylum for them in their necessities.

The time now approached for Basil himself to reap the eternal reward of his faith and good works. Worn out with the austerities of his life, the ardour of his zeal, the extent of his labours, and the repeated attacks of a disorder which for some years had been gradually gaining upon him, he prepared



to render up his great account. He called his brethren and disciples around him, and, after making such arrangements as appeared to him the most desirable in the ministry, for the welfare of the Church, he conjured them, with his dying breath, to hold fast by the faith, to be unwearied in well-doing and to love one another. Scarcely had he finished his exhortation, when calmly saying, "Lord Jesus, into thy hands I commit my spirit," he expired.

The grief occasioned by the death of this great man was profound and universal. Pagans and Jews vied with the Christians in their testimonials of respect for his memory; and his funeral, from the prodigious concourse of people that attended it, including all the most dignified persons in the country, afforded an extraordinary contrast to the poverty and simplicity of his own habits during his life.

The most celebrated works of St. Basil are his *Hexameron*, or Homilies on the Six Days of the Creation; his Homilies upon divers subjects of doctrine and morality, his Panegyrics, his Greater and Lesser Rules, and above all his Letters, in which he has blended all the fervour of his zeal with the warmth of his affections, and which likewise afford us a complete picture of the principal events and characters of his time.

SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS  
OF  
SAINT BASIL THE GREAT.

AFFLICTIONS.

THE physician attacks the disease, and not the patient ; his object is to cure him whom he causes to suffer. It is thus that God, whose mercy is infinite, chastises us only to bring us into the way of salvation, or to confirm our course in it. You are not angry with your physician, when he applies the cautery or the knife to your gangrened limb ; on the contrary, you can scarcely find language adequate to the expression of your gratitude ; you keep repeating that he has saved your life, by preventing the disease from spreading, and you pay him liberally for his attentions. Yet you murmur against the Lord, who tries us only for our good ; and you are unwilling to acknowledge that the afflictions with which he visits us, are the only means capable of restoring health to our souls, or of securing the continuance of it, when it is restored to us.

*Homily on Christian Patience.*

ALMS-GIVING.

THE alms that we bestow on the poor is at once a gift and a loan ; it is a gift, inasmuch as we ought to require nothing for it ; and it is a loan, because the Lord himself deigns to become the debtor of him who advances it. And can there, then, be found any one who would refuse the Maker of the

Universe as a guarantee? If a rich individual offers his security, you accept it without hesitation; but when God himself engages to be answerable for the poor, you dare to consider and calculate, before you open your hand.

*Homily on the 15th Psalm.*

“I do no one any injustice,” you say, “I only keep what is my own.” Your own, how is that? Have you not come naked out of your mother’s womb, and will you not return naked to your mother-earth? Whence, then, comes the wealth that you possess? If you imagine that you owe it to chance, you are impious or ignorant, insomuch that you know not Him from whom only it flows. If you acknowledge that you receive it from God, tell us why it is that He has thus liberally bestowed it on you? Why is it that you are rich, and that your neighbour is poor? Is it not that you may sanctify your abundance by your benevolence, whilst he may sanctify his poverty by his patience and resignation. Do not deceive yourself with respect to the ways of Providence: the bread that you keep shut up belongs to the hungry; the shoes which you hoard till they rot, belong to the bare-foot. To withhold assistance from those who are in want, when you have the means of relieving them, is not only a cruelty,—it is an injustice.

*Homily on the 12th Chapter of Luke, v. 18. 20.*

#### CHARITY.

I HAVE learned from Jesus Christ himself what charity is, and how we ought to practise it; for he says, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.”—John xiii. 35. Thus I can never flatter myself that I may obtain the name of a servant of Christ, if I have not a real and unfeigned charity within me.

*Letter to the Bishops of the Maritime Towns.*

## CREATION.

“LET the earth bring forth,”—let us reflect on these words: before they were uttered, the earth was sterile and void. No sooner does it hear the command of the Almighty, than behold, instantly it is attired in the most brilliant garb: it opens its bosom, which throbs with gladness,—become a fruitful mother, hastening to display its new treasures, it spreads forth the innumerable vegetable tribes with which it is adorned. All the various stages of vegetation appear at the same instant: the bud, the blossom, and the perfect fruit. The valleys and the meadows are clothed with abundant pasturage, and harvests waving like the crisped billows of the ocean, curled by gentle breezes. The whole surface of the globe presents the prospect of a magnificent garden, varied to infinity; whilst, at the same time, forests rise in thick masses, and every different species of tree and shrub shoots forth, some lifting their heads towards the heavens, others bending over their parent earth, each with their distinguishing character and form\*.

Let us pause a moment to consider only one of these productions,—let us stop to contemplate the vine,—what varied phenomena does it not present to our eyes in its root, its stem, its branches, its tendrils, its buds, its fruit, at first so bitter, and afterwards so sweet! Does not every thing connected with it recall the sacred comparison which our Lord makes of himself with it? He desires that we should be the branches of this vine; that we should be grafted in himself by faith; he invites us to bring forth fruit in abundance, lest, being sterile, we should be cut off, and cast into the fire. He saith also, by the voice of his prophets,

\* It is easy to see, in this beautiful passage, as well as in many others of the same description, the aid derived from them by Hervey, Sturm, St. Pierre, and other modern writers.

“My well-beloved hath a vineyard, on a very fruitful hill,” Isaiah v. 1. And again, “I had planted thee, a noble vine,” Jer. ii. 21. Who does not see that this vine is the Christian people; that the hedges with which it is surrounded are the commandments, that the prophets, the apostles, and the ministers form the palisades, by which it is protected? That he wills us to extend our affections of charity to our neighbour, as the vine throws out its tendrils; and that, like it, we should suffer ourselves to be pruned of every thing that may be useless,—that is, that we cast aside those earthly cares that weigh down our hearts; that we permit not ourselves to throw out too much wood, or too many leaves,—I would say, to affect pomp, or show, or seek the applause of strangers; but that all our desires should tend only to please the true Lord of the vineyard.

Shall we stop to consider the countless species of trees, of which some afford us wholesome food, others serve towards the construction of our houses, others for the fabrication of our vessels, others for the supplying of our hearths. What amazing diversity in their forms, their vegetation, their fruits; but how can we attempt to describe so many wonders! The same fluid, impelled from the roots, nourishes at once the root itself, the bark, the wood, the pith,—it becomes leaves, it distributes itself among the branches, and nourishes the fruit that it also developes. Who can explain the variety of these metamorphoses? How is it that this same fluid is changed into wine in the grape, into oil in the olive? How is it that it is sweet in one, and unctuous in the other? Whence this infinite variety in flavour,—how is it that the sweetness of the grape differs from that of the apple, the fig, or the fruit of the palm-tree? How is it that the same fluid, which is so agreeable to the palate in passing through sweet plants, in transmitting itself through others of a different quality, becomes

harsh, or sour, or acrid ; or even as bitter as gall, as in wormwood ?

Equal variety is to be found in colours : the same fluid that we see redden one flower, gives a purple glow to another, an azure hue to a third, and a snowy whiteness to a fourth ; presenting, at the same time, as many different odours as tints.

“ Let the earth bring forth.” Such are the few words that produced creation, and perfected it ; the first impulse once given, such it has been throughout all succeeding ages, and such it will continue to be, till the universe itself shall come to an end.

*The Hexameron, Homily v.*

#### DANGER OF TEMPORISING.

“ Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water,” says the prophet Isaiah. How culpable, then, are those preachers, who turn the wine of the doctrine of the inspired writings into water, if we may so express ourselves, by mixing with it the suggestions of their own imaginations, to the great injury of souls. To gain the good graces of those who listen to them, they flatter their propensities, and lead them away, by the complaisance with which they discuss their vices. They weaken the holy energy of the Scriptures, which express themselves so forcibly against every kind of evil : and, as if they had sworn the destruction of their auditors, they dwell upon nothing but the mercy of God, of which they draw an exaggerated picture, and on similar topics which render more and more careless those whom they ought, with holy jealousy, to bring back, by every argument, to the fear of the Lord.

*Commentary on Isaiah.*

## DESIRABLENESS OF LEARNING.

THE essential virtue of fruit-trees is to bring forth fruit in season; nevertheless they receive a sort of dress, which heightens their beauty, from the leaves that quiver lightly on their branches. It is the same with the soul; though its essential fruit be truth, yet we do it no injury by adding to it the ornaments of learning, which, like the foliage that shades the fruit, gives it a yet more tempting appearance. Moses, that illustrious legislator, so renowned among all people by his wisdom, had, we are told, exercised his mind in the sciences of the Egyptians, before he gave himself up to the study of Eternal things: and we see, many ages after, Daniel, the sage, the prudent, acting in the same manner; for, it is said, that it was not till he had thoroughly investigated the science of the Chaldeans, at Babylon, he began to study the Inspired Writings.

*On the Utility of Profane Learning.*

## ENVY.

ENVY is a passion actually diabolical in its nature, for it makes war against God himself; and being incapable, in its impotence, of clouding his Sovereign Majesty, it attacks him in the gifts his beneficence has bestowed on man.

*Homily on Envy.*

## GOD THE GIVER OF ALL GOOD.

NOTHING is more certain than this truth, which cannot be too loudly proclaimed, that for all the good that may be found in us, we are indebted solely to God, from whom alone, and not from ourselves, it cometh.

*Morals, iv.*

## GUARDIAN ANGELS.

EVERY faithful Christian has his good angel, who watches over him, and never leaves him; unless absolutely con-

strained to do it, by the pestilential vapours of sin. Angels are distributed around us in great numbers. They form an army, an encampment, according to the expression so frequently met with in Holy Writ. A numerous army, a well-regulated camp, are not afraid of the attacks of the enemy. Thus those who live in the practise of piety and good works, need not fear the devices of the enemy of salvation; for they may be assured their guardian angels will watch over them, to apprize them of his snares.

*Homily on the 33rd Psalm.*

#### HUMAN LIFE.

HUMAN life is a journey which commences, for each of us, the moment we enter the world, and which terminates at the grave. We are like those who, passengers on the ocean, are wafted by the winds towards the port, whilst they are asleep in the vessel; and who, insensible of the progression of their course, arrive there before they are aware. It is the same with the whole of life. It runs on, impelled by a continual current, which carries us unconsciously along with it. We sleep, and during our sleep, our brief space of time flies silently over our heads: we wake to a thousand cares, and while struggling with them, life pursues its rapid course at the same rate. We are, here below, only as travellers; every thing rapidly recedes from our view, we leave every thing behind us; we throw a passing glance on the enamelled meads, or the purling brook, or whatever other object may charm our sight; we feel a pleasure in contemplating it, and before we can analyze our pleasure, we have already lost sight of it. To charming prospects and a smiling country, often succeed rocks, ravines, precipices, and rugged paths; sometimes infested with ferocious animals, or venomous reptiles; or perplexed with thorns which



lacerate the flesh ; these things annoy or afflict us for a moment, and the next we are beyond their reach. Such is life ; neither its pleasures nor its pains are durable, nor does the road we traverse belong to us, any more than any of the objects with which it is diversified : other travellers have preceded us on it, others are coming along it at the same time with ourselves, and countless multitudes will follow us.

*Homily on the 1st Psalm.*

#### IMPERFECTION OF HUMAN HAPPINESS.

THE earth does not contain one single inhabitant whose life is perfectly happy. Do we ever see a stream, the waters of which are uninterruptedly pure ? It is only God who is happy, entirely and unalterably. We ourselves resemble running waters : with whatever proud distinctions men may flatter themselves, they have still all one common source, and this source is inconsiderable ; like waves, their years press one another forward, and they never cease to flow on, till at last, after some having made a little more noise than others, or traversing a little more extent of country in their course, they all mix together in one common abyss.

*Homily on the Contempt of the things of this World.*

#### INVITATION TO A FRIEND.

You are my debtor, for I have given you my affection : you must pay me it back with interest. The Lord does not forbid this kind of usury. 'To acquit yourself of your debt, you must come to see me,—that is the principal ; and you must come quickly,—that shall be the interest.

*Letter to Jovius, Bishop of Cerrea.*

#### MISERIES OF DEBT.

A MAN pressed by necessity goes to solicit assistance of a rich miser. He throws himself at his feet, he supplicates,

he stoops to the most humiliating abasements. What does he not say? But all in vain! The usurer, a being without pity, counts natural feelings as nothing: his heart remains unmoved; neither prayers nor tears can soften him. He continues inflexible in his refusals. He declares with oaths, nay, even with imprecations against himself, that he is without money; that he is making inquiries for it on his own account, and that he shall be obliged to borrow it of some money-lender at interest. But let the solicitor, catching at this word interest, offer to pay it, and produce some pledge as security, and straight the matter takes a different turn: the usurer then recollects that their families have long been united in ties of intimacy. "We are old friends," says he; "I will look about, and see if I have any money at home—it is possible I may have a little, somewhere or other; and now I think of it, I recollect I have a sum which one of my friends confided to me, the other day, to put out to interest for him: but he asks such a high premium for it: but, however, I shall abate something, as it is for you, and I shall be better to deal with than a stranger." When by means of this deceptive language he gains possession of the poor man's securities, even to that of his personal liberty, he lets him go, under the double tie of his necessities and his bonds. Nevertheless, the unfortunate man, glad of temporary relief, begins by enjoying himself a little; his cheerfulness announces some change in his situation. His table is better served—he is better dressed, his servants look neater, he keeps company, is surrounded with flatterers, and every thing about him wears the mask of plenty. But as he sees his money gradually melt away, as day after day brings nearer and nearer that of payment, then come sorrowful thoughts, nights without sleep, days without gladness. The sun shines no more for him, and life itself appears only a heavy burden. He counts, with bitterness,

the weeks that seem to fly on so rapidly towards the fatal period, he trembles whilst he calculates the months big with the accumulation of usurious interest. If he closes his eyes, his creditor appears to him, standing close to his head, like an evil dream, and if he lies awake, he is still pursued by the same image.

The Scriptures say to us, "Drink waters out of thine own cistern," that is to say, examine well what you have; never have recourse to foreign sources, and go not beyond your own supplies, for the necessities of life. You have plate, jewels, horses, furniture: sell them;—any, or all of them, rather than enthrall your liberty. "Who, I?" you say, "I, to go and have my things sold at an auction?" Will you like better, then, to wait for the day, not far off, when they will be taken away, whether you choose it or not, and sold under your own eyes, for a mere nothing, enriching others at your expense? Is it not more desirable to rouse yourself in time, and depend on your own honest exertions, for extricating yourself from your difficulties by degrees, rather than to borrow an ephemeral opulence, the inevitable consequences of which must be the absorption of every thing you possess. If you have enough wherewith to meet your debts, why not liberate yourself from them at once, by sacrifices which are, after all, a mere nothing compared to the misery they will eventually save you from. If you have it not, you only palliate your ill by borrowing; you will never cure it by that means. I have seen, and who is there that can see such a sight without groaning from his inmost soul, I have seen unfortunate children dragged into the market-place, and publicly sold to the highest bidder, to pay their father's debts. If you cannot leave fortunes to your children, at any rate, leave them a good name. The poverty of parents has never yet been imputed to any one as a crime; but a father overwhelmed with debt leaves

his son a prison for his inheritance, and with it the opprobrium of a name disgraced.

*Homily against Usury\*.*

#### NATURE OF THE ALMIGHTY.

Would you endeavour to speak of the Almighty? You must begin by detaching yourself from all ideas of the senses—elevate yourself above this terrestrial world; soar in imagination beyond the skies: then pause to contemplate the magnificent spectacle that presents itself to your thoughts! the celestial armies, the choirs of angels, the archangels, the kingdoms surrounded with glory; thrones, virtues, principalities and powers—go further,—beyond created things, and venture to raise your eyes to God himself, in the centre of this eternal beatitude, IMMUTABLE—the same—incapable of vicissitude or change, dwelling in light inaccessible. Meditate on his immensity, which nothing can bound—his power, which nothing can limit—his splendour in which all other splendour is lost, his goodness which is inexhaustible, his beauty which is perfect and beyond all description—and you will then acknowledge that, though it may be possible for the soul to be impressed with some faint perception of his adorable excellences, it will be eternally impossible for human language to give any adequate idea of his INFINITE PERFECTION.

*Homily on Faith.*

\* What a powerful picture is here drawn of the characters of a money-lender and a debtor, so true to nature that we may every day compare it with existing originals. In addition to all the miseries which even our own laws heap upon the unfortunate, those of Rome, and other countries, added that of making the creditor absolute master of the person of his debtor, in case of non-payment; and history records instances of such cruelties practised on those occasions by infuriated avarice and revenge, as humanity shudders to reflect upon.

## PATIENCE UNDER INJURIES.

HAS any one permitted himself to make use of injurious expressions respecting you? Reply to them by blessings; does he treat you ill? Be patient. Does he reproach you? is the reproach just? if it be, condemn yourself; if not, it is but as a breath of air: flattery could not really impart a merit to you, if you have it not, nor can calumny give you faults that you do not actually possess. Does he tax you with ignorance? in showing yourself angry you justify the charge—does he persecute you? Think of Jesus Christ—can you ever suffer as he has suffered!

*Homily on Anger.*

## POVERTY AND AVARICE.

How can I depict, with sufficient force, the misery of the poor man! He casts his eyes around him; his house, already stripped, leaves him no longer the prospect of a resource; without the smallest coin, without even the hope of being able to procure any, all he possesses in the world are the few miserable rags that cover him, and which would not altogether fetch more than a few pence. What can he do! he turns his eyes towards his children,—if he were to take them to the market-place, and expose them for sale,—this would for a time, at any rate, relieve him from the dread of the death that threatens him. He will go—he is determined upon it. Alas! let us for a moment stop to contemplate this unfortunate being, struggling with the famine which devours him, and with his paternal affection: famine presents itself to him under the most agonizing shapes of death; nature asserts her rights, and calls on him to die with his children; sometimes one triumphs, sometimes the other. At last he bends under the weight of his necessity—he groans, he yields.

But now comes a new uncertainty, still more overwhelming.

“Which of the children shall I part with the first? Which will the man who (like the rich man in the Evangelist) has corn to sell, which will he be most likely to prefer? Shall it be the eldest? But by his very birth-right he has a claim upon me:—must it be the youngest? Can I be without pity for him, at his tender age, too young even to know his misfortune? Shall it be this? No; he is so like his mother. That? But he has such a fine capacity for the sciences—he seems to be born for them. What frightful perplexity! What shall I become! unhappy wretch that I am! to whom shall I take them?—what ferocious beast am I going to resemble. Shall I dare to stifle the cry of nature: but if I keep them all, I shall see them all die of famine. What if I sell only one? But how then can I look at the others: with what eyes will they regard a father, whose feelings for them they will have too much reason to distrust! How can I return to my own house without their brother, whom all of them would want to see again, and accuse me by their looks of having deprived them of! And how could I sit down to a meal which would have cost me my son!”

Now see the unfortunate on his way; see what torrents of tears gush from his eyes: he has at last made up his mind. Necessity compels him—he determines to part with the most cherished of his children—it is to you who are rich, that he comes to offer him. You, insensible to his tears, you shut your heart to all the feelings of nature: you see him exhausted with hunger, yet you bargain with him; you trifle with his griefs, you prolong his sufferings: he offers you a part of himself for a morsel of food; and so far from your hand trembling, as you hold it out to receive the victim, you insult him by cavilling about the price. You cry out about it, and whilst he is enduring a thousand tortures at once, you are thinking of nothing but how you

can beat him down. Money is always before your eyes, and in your thoughts; whether you awake or sleep, you never think of any thing else. With your will every thing would be changed into gold, and unfortunately for you, it is too much the case with respect to yourself: all your speculations, all your manœuvres, all your undertakings, bring you gold; your gold begets gold, and multiplies itself under the extortions of your usury. The insatiable appetite of avarice is never gorged; the more it devours, the more it craves\*.

*Homily against Avarice.*

PRAYER.

“WHETHER therefore ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”—1 Cor. x. 31. Thus, when you sit down at table, pray; when you take your bread, thank Him who has given it to you; when you are satisfied, bless the liberal hand that has provided for your subsistence; whilst you are putting on your garments, elevate your grateful heart with love to Him who furnishes you with means to defend yourself against the inclemency of the seasons. At the close of the day render thanks to this same Providence, who has placed the sun in the midst of the firmament, to give you light for your diurnal labours; and who has created the stars to dissipate the darkness of the night. When your eyes are raised to heaven, to contemplate the beauty of those stars which decorate it, adore the universal Creator, whose wisdom is manifested in all His works; and when night has wrapped all nature in silence and repose, celebrate, by your praises, the Divine benevo-

\* It is no ideal picture which St. Basil draws in this affecting description of a father reduced to the misery of selling one of his children into slavery, for bread; the law permitted recourse to the dismal necessity, which the distress of the poor, under a tyrannical and luxurious government, rendered but too common.

lence which sends us sleep, even in despite of ourselves, to suspend our cares, and repair our strength.

Pray then, I repeat it, without ceasing; not in mere words, but in so living united to God, in your affections and thoughts, that your life shall be one long and continued prayer.

*Panegyric on Juliet,*

#### PREACHERS OF THE WORD.

THE Holy Word ought to be set forth without ostentation, without any views of self-interest, without any other end than to advance the glory of God, as purely as if we saw Him before us, as our Judge.

*Morals, xxx.*

#### PROGRESS OF RELIGION IN THE SOUL.

How much we ought to admire the profound wisdom of our Divine Legislator, who, willing to guide us in the paths of virtue, shows us that the first step towards learning to do well, is to “cease to do evil.” Had he begun by exhorting us to perfection, we should scarcely have had the courage even to make the attempt; but in proposing to us what is of comparatively easy execution, he tries our strength by degrees. It is with piety as with the mysterious ladder that was exhibited to the patriarch Jacob, the foot of which rested on the earth, but the summit reached the skies; it is only by degrees that we can ascend, but it is by degrees that we can finally arrive at the highest elevation of which our nature is capable. The first step we take in mounting a ladder is that which disengages our foot from the earth; so, in the scale of religion, the first step towards the attainment of good is the estranging ourselves from the practice of evil.

*Homily on the First Psalm.*



## RENUNCIATION OF THE WORLD.

IF we really desire to live according to the holy precepts of the evangelists, one of our first cares should be to disengage ourselves from all attachment to the world; for we cannot belong to it, and at the same time participate in the graces of the Holy Spirit. “*O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee.*” (John xvii. 25.) Jesus has said, and again he says, “*The world cannot receive the Spirit of Truth.*” (John xiv. 9.)

It is then indispensably necessary that he who would devote himself with sincerity to the Lord, should renounce the enervating habits of a worldly life, and fix his most cherished thoughts incessantly on the world to come.

*Primary Rules ; Answer to the 5th Question.*

## REPROOF.

HE who takes upon himself to reprove his neighbour, ought to do it as in the presence of God—moved by a tender charity towards him who may have fallen into error, and solely actuated by the wish to recall him to his duty.

*Letter XXXIV.*

## THE ROSE.

THE rose captivates my eyes; but I never look on it without its inspiring in me a solemn and sad reflection, in recalling to me the transgression that caused the earth to bring forth thorns, which before she knew not.

*Homily on the Terrestrial Paradise.*

## THE SEA.

“AND God said, *Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place.*” (Gen. i. 9.) Have you never reflected, when seated on the margin of a spouting fountain—how comes this water from the bosom of the

earth? what impels it forward? where are the reservoirs whence it flows? when will it terminate its course? how is it that it never dries up, and that the sea, into which all other waters empty themselves, never overflows? A single sentence will serve as a reply to all these questions. "*Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place.*" The sea, agitated by the tempests that rage over it, is often raised to a prodigious height, but the moment it touches the shore all its fury exhausts itself in foam, and it returns into its bed. "*Fear ye not me? saith the LORD: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea, by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?*" (Jer. v. 22.)

Ah, how beautiful is the spectacle that the sea presents, when we see it, shining like silver, in its calmness; when its surface, gently ruffled by mild breezes, glows with purple and gold, when no longer breaking with violence against its surrounding shores, it seems to approach them softly, only to solace them with peaceful caresses.

*The Hexameron, Homily IV.*

#### SENSUAL PLEASURES.

MAN is superior to the brute creation, by the structure of his frame, as well as by the dignity of his soul. Quadrupeds, formed to incline their heads towards the earth, seem destined to think only of the satisfying of their appetites. Thy head, O man, is raised towards the heavens, thy eyes are naturally elevated to objects above thee. When thou degradest thyself by sensual affections, thou puttest thyself on a level, in thy inclinations, with irrational beasts; thy soul assumes their likeness. Thou art called to nobler destinies; seek, then, the Most High, seek Jesus Christ. Draw the

rule of thy conduct from thy conformation; elevate thy thoughts to heaven,—it is there that thou wilt find thy native country.

*The Hexameron, Homily ix.*

#### SLANDER.

THE slanderer does harm to three persons at once; to him of whom he says the ill, to him to whom he says it, and most of all to himself, in saying it.

*Letter to the Faithful of Neocesarea.*

#### SPIRIT OF CRITICISM REPREHENDED.

THERE are many who go to hear a preacher, less as disciples desirous of instruction, than as spies, eager to discover the weakest parts of his discourse; and who, even in the Sacred Writings themselves, seek only for subjects of criticism, instead of edification.

*Homily xxix.*

#### SPIRITUAL ADVICE.

IF you know how to search the Scriptures for the help they offer you, you will have no need of my aid, or of that of any other person, to guide you in your conduct. You will have the illumination of the Holy Spirit to enlighten you; that is to say, you will draw your light from the source of Light itself.

“*Work out your salvation with fear and trembling;*” but I conjure you not to suffer any thing like distrust to take possession of your soul; nothing can be more hurtful to its interests. Are you not in the service of the best of Masters? is He not always willing to come to your assistance? Look up to Him with faith, and you will find that not only he will never abandon you, but that every time you pray to Him, with sincerity and confidence, you will

feel His presence in the interior of your soul ; He will deign Himself to say to you, “ Here am I.”

*Letter to a Lady.*

#### VAIN GLORY.

THOSE who exalt themselves upon the good they may be enabled to perform, and seek to be praised by others for it, are in effect guilty of sacrilege ; for, in appropriating to themselves the gifts of God, as if they were their own, they take the glory from Him to whom it is due, to invest themselves with it.

*Minor Rules.*

#### VICISSITUDES OF HUMAN LIFE.

THE lands that you cultivate to-day, may to-morrow be cultivated by another. Look at those rich farms, those opulent houses, how often, within a certain number of years, have they changed owners ! You ask who they belong to ; —scarcely have you got an answer, when, if you put the question again, you would have a different one. So it is that human life is an endless circle of vicissitudes.

*Homily on the First Psalm.*

#### UNCERTAINTY OF WORLDLY HAPPINESS.

SUCH is the uncertainty of worldly things, and our inability to guard entirely against the contingencies the future may have in store for us, that no one can be pronounced really happy, till the end of his worldly career puts it out of the power of any evil to happen to him.

*Homily on the First Psalm.*

#### UNCHARITABLE JUDGMENTS.

IF it be evident, in examining the blasphemy which the Pharisees were guilty of towards Jesus Christ, and the appalling condemnation they thereby drew down upon their heads, that to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, is to attribute its operations to its enemy the devil, what must we think of those among ourselves who make no scruple of

calling vain or ostentatious the men to whom it is given to apply themselves fervently to piety, and who have a pleasure in blackening, by the most unjust suspicions, actions of the most unquestionable excellence.

*Minor Rules ; Answer to the 273rd Question.*

#### UNIVERSALITY OF THE DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

THERE is nothing in nature that does not lead us to its Author: the inanimate stone, the insect we crush beneath our feet, render testimony to the God who has made them. His wisdom manifests itself even in things which we may deem trifling or contemptible. The same hand that has spread abroad the magnificent heavens, and hollowed out the bottomless abysses of the deep, has also fashioned the imperceptible tube that sheathes the venomous sting with which he has armed the bee. Never let us say of any thing whatsoever, that it happened by chance; there is nothing that has not been concerted; nothing that has not its own particular design and end, by which it forms a link in the chain of appointed order. There is no such thing as chance. It is only the boldness of ignorance that talks of things being strange, and unaccountable, and unlucky. "*Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father.*" Have you numbered the hairs of your own head? You cannot do it, but God has done it for you; not one of them has been forgotten. His piercing eye permits not any thing to escape it.

*Homily on the 32d Psalm.*

#### UNJUSTIFIABLENESS OF REVENGE.

LET every one beware how he indulges the idea of returning evil for evil. In such deplorable contests it is always he who comes off, as he may think, the conqueror, that is the most really to be pitied.

*Homily on Anger.*

## SAINT GREGORY,

*BISHOP OF NYSSA.*

BORN, 351; DIED, 400.

To say of this amiable and gifted man that he was worthy the happiness of calling St. Basil the Great his brother, is to make sufficient eulogium both on his talents and virtues. Brought up under the same excellent parents, and with the same spiritual advantages, his destiny only differed from that of his brother, in being less exposed to political enemies, and pursuing his labours for the benefit of mankind, in the bosom of domestic peace, instead of the regions of monkish seclusion.

Gregory early began the study of profane literature, in which he made a rapid progress. He married a virtuous and honourable lady, named Theosebia, by whom he had several children. The bright example of his brother Basil soon attracted him towards the sacred profession, and he was ordained to the office of reader; but his passion for rhetoric, to the study of which he had devoted his youth, haunted him so incessantly, that, unable to withstand its continual allurements, he, for a time, forsook his clerical duties, and gave lessons to youth in this his favourite art.

St. Gregory Nazianzen heard with grief of this dereliction in the brother of his friend. His own

passion for rhetoric was not less ardent, yet he had had the resolution, when at Athens, to refuse a professorship in that dazzling branch of human learning, offered to him in the hope of retaining him in that city, and withdrawing his attention from sacred studies: he therefore conceived himself every way authorised, both by experience and friendship, to address him on the subject, which he accordingly did with equal sincerity and affection. "Nature," says he, in his letter to him, "has gifted me with good common sense: will you pardon me for speaking with so much confidence of myself? This disposition of mind makes me spare neither my friends nor myself, the moment that I see any thing amiss, either in the one or the other. There exists between all those who live under the law of God, and march under the banner of the same Gospel, a holy association, which unites them closely to each other. Thus, when an injurious report concerning yourself is circulating in the dark, can you be displeased if I have the frankness to apprise you of it? It is said, then, and not to your credit, that the dæmon of ambition, as the Greek poet expresses it, is leading you, without any attempt at opposition on your part, into an evil path. What change has been wrought in you? In what do you find yourself less perfect, that you now abandon our sacred volumes, which you have been in the habit of reading to the people, for profane authors, and determine upon embracing the profession of a rhetorician, rather than that of a Christian? As for myself, I have done exactly the

reverse, and I thank God for it. Do not persist, I conjure you, in your design: return to what you were before,—the most excellent of men. Do not say to me, ‘Does it then follow that I have renounced the Christian life?’ God forbid! Not entirely, perhaps, have you renounced it, but in part, at any rate, you have;—even if there were no objection but the ground or pretext for scandal that you give, that motive alone ought to turn you from your undertaking. What good can result from giving rise to malignant remarks? We are not placed in the world solely for ourselves, but for others, and it is not enough to retain our own esteem: we ought to endeavour to merit that of others also. I have given you my advice; you will excuse my frankness, for the sake of the friendship I bear you, the grief I feel, and the zeal by which I am animated towards yourself, the sacerdotal office, and Christians in general. Must I pray with you, or for you? I implore in your behalf the aid of that God who can call even the dead to life.”

This letter recalled Gregory to a sense of the all-absolute claims his clerical duties had upon his time and talents, and he accordingly resumed them with a humility which showed his sincerity. His good resolutions were, no doubt, strengthened by a visit he paid, immediately after his return to the altar, to Macrina, that affectionate and zealous sister, who, after devoting the tender bloom of her youth to the care of her brothers, had employed her advancing



years in the guiding a small company of holy women in the paths of heavenly life, on the banks of the Irus, amid the seclusion of the forests of Pontus, already consecrated to devotion by the labours of her brother Basil.

No sooner was St. Basil elevated to the episcopal chair of Cesarea, in 370, than he summoned his brother Gregory to assist him in the duties of his new diocese; but the bishopric of Nyssa, a city of Cappadocia, near Lesser Armenia, becoming vacant the following year, Basil gave up the pleasure of his brother's aid and society, and ordained him to it, in 372, anxious rather to place him in a situation where he could be still more extensively useful, than to retain him near himself.

Gregory would have much preferred remaining with Basil as an humble servitor at the Holy Altar, but, the voice of the people seconding the suggestion of his brother, he was compelled to yield to their united dictates. Basil, on ordaining Gregory, expressed his hope that the bishop would do honour to his office, rather than the office to the bishop; and fully were his wishes on this head gratified. The Arians were at this time strong in the protection and favour of the Emperor Valens. Gregory had already become formidable to them by the learning and virtue which afterwards procured him in general council the title of "Father of the Fathers," and they lost no time in endeavouring to get him displaced. Unable to allege any fault in himself, they

could only find it in the manner of his election; and, under pretence that it had not been conducted in exact conformity to canonical rules, they raised such a host of frivolous and vexatious annoyances around him, that to avoid them, as he would the stings of a swarm of gnats, he took refuge in obscurity, and concealed himself among other bishops, who were living in exile, to avoid the persecutions of the Arians.

At the death of the Emperor Valens, in 378, Gregory was restored to his see by the Emperor Gratian, but the pleasure he might have felt at this event was damped by the death of Basil shortly after, which called forth from him an eloquent panegyric of the virtues of the brother to whom he had looked up, from infancy, with reverence and affection.

In the autumn of the same year that Basil died, Gregory was called upon by his colleagues to inquire into and redress the abuses and dissensions which divers heresies had promoted in Arabia and Palestine. He took that opportunity to visit Jerusalem, and, with all the sensibility of piety and genius combined, explored Bethlehem, the Mount of Olives, Calvary, Golgotha, and other spots rendered sacred by their association with the name of Him who condescended to make them the scenes of his human sufferings. "When I saw those holy places," says he, in a letter to an illustrious and devout lady, who had devoted herself to a religious life in Jerusalem, "I was filled with a joy and pleasure which

no tongue can express." Yet he had the mortification to see as many dissensions in that holy city as in any other ; and in his "Treatise on those who visit Jerusalem," which he wrote shortly after his return, the manner in which he expresses himself concerning pilgrimages, allows us to conclude that his own observation of their effects led him to consider them, even in that early age of the Church, as more dangerous than profitable to piety, and too often made the excuse for a vagrant disposition.

In 381 and the subsequent years, Gregory assisted at the Council of Constantinople, and was one of the bishops chosen to form a centre of Catholic communion in the East. In this city he pronounced the funeral oration of his sister Macrina, whose last moments he had the comfort of attending, warned of her illness in a dream, after a separation of eight years, and whose remains he carried himself to the grave, assisted by the most eminent of the clergy in the place.

Three years afterwards, Gregory was deprived, by death, of his wife, a woman of many virtues, who, in her later years, devoted herself to religious duties, and has been supposed by some to have become a deaconess. His own death took place in the beginning of the year 400 ; but his zeal, piety, and eloquence, are still to be seen in his works, which were published at Paris in 1615, and 1638, in three folio volumes, by the learned Jesuit Fronto le Duc. His "Hexameron, or Book on the Six Days' Work

of the Creation of the World," is a supplement to his brother Basil's work on the same subject; in it he dilates on the abstruser points which Basil had omitted, as above the comprehension of the vulgar, and displays much knowledge of philosophy in the discussion of them. His book "On the Formation of Man," though written before the Hexameron, may nevertheless be regarded as a continuation of it, and presents a glorious picture of the attributes, duties, and privileges of this, the Creator's most favoured creature. His "Inscription of the Psalms," and "Exposition of the Sixth Psalm," are admirably calculated to set forth the beauty and value of that portion of the Scriptures; his "Eight Homilies on the three first chapters of Ecclesiastes," are excellent in their moral instruction, and literal explication. He has likewise given fifteen Homilies, addressed to the pious widow Olympias, on the Canticles, which he explains mystically; five Orations on the Lord's Prayer, and eight on the Beatitudes; all filled with practical piety, and worthy to be studied in the same spirit of devotion and humility in which it is evident they have been written. His Sermons, on various subjects, are chiefly of a practical nature, and well calculated for general instruction; among them is one "On the Resurrection," peculiarly interesting as containing the substance of a discourse on the same subject, held by him with his sister Macrina the day before her death. His account of the life of that excellent woman is an interesting portrait

of Christian duties, both social and religious. His Essays on matters of Church-discipline will be judged differently, according to the different views of those who read them, but he no where shows a narrow or servile spirit ; and his controversial writings, whilst they are distinguished by the copiousness and vigour of their arguments, are yet wholly free from the violence and personal malignity too often engendered by the desire to convert, which gradually grows into a determination not to be overcome.

The style of St. Gregory of Nyssa is marked alike with the excellences and the faults of his age and country ; his eloquence is flowing and harmonious, and his imagination fertile to an excess ; for it supplies him with a copiousness of imagery which seems as if it could not exhaust itself even by repetition, and betrays him into what one of his critics calls a flux of words : hence it has been said, that he ought to be known, but known by extracts ; this remark applies, however, to the manner only of his discourses. The matter is always excellent, and fully capable of bearing to be presented to the reflective reader, in the various points of view which his fertility of expression enables him continually to offer.

## SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS

### SAINT GREGORY OF NYSSA.

#### DAILY BREAD.

WE say to God, *Give us bread* ; we do not say to Him, give us riches, the pleasures of wealth, garments of purple, gold, and precious stones, the command of armies and provinces, numerous troops of men or beasts to administer to our luxury ; the talent which makes the orator, the recompenses that men adjudge to merit ; all these things divert the soul from what ought to be its first necessity.—We ask for *bread* ; what profound philosophy in this single word ! Cease, O mortals, to waste yourselves in vain and frivolous cares ; cease to aggravate the labours and troubles which press upon you. The real necessities of nature may be reduced into very little compass : all that you owe to your body is to support it with some aliment, always easy enough to procure, so long as we are contented with what is necessary. What use is there in multiplying tributes which must eventually fall back upon ourselves ? What good is there in chaining and binding ourselves with so many bonds for the sake of gold or silver, shining metals, and all for what ?—to minister to the caprices of an exactor that admits of no relaxation, of a belly which never has enjoyment enough. You owe it bread, to supply what the body does not furnish it with, and you go about braving winds and waves, to bring it meats,

the savour of which does not exhale itself further than the walls of the palace. Say to Him who causes bread to spring out of the bosom of the earth, who gives the ravens their food, who gives to all flesh its substance, who opens His hand, and fills all things living with plenteousness,—say to Him, Give me bread, and let it be the earning of my rightful labour. I say rightful, because as God is the principle of justice, it is not from His hands we receive the bread which we earn by unjust means. He hears us, when the good we enjoy is not acquired by fraud and usurpation, when it has not been the cause of tears to others, when our wealth has not made others wretched. Were the opposite the case, whilst we were praying to God to give us bread, another might say, Do not address yourself for it to God, but to the devil, who is the father of injustice.

*On the Lord's Prayer.*

#### DEATH.

THE immeasurable affliction that we sometimes feel at the death of our relations and friends, takes its source from our ignorance of that which constitutes the real good. It is then important to rectify the general ideas entertained on this point. The real good cannot consist in created things, since those things which are useful to some are hurtful to others; such as fire, or the sun; and those which are most prized by men, such as strength, beauty, power, have but a short duration. That which is not good for all, or which does not always continue so, or which is not so in itself, is not, properly speaking, of the nature of goodness. When death separates us from these created goods, she does not deprive us of the sole good,—on the contrary, she gives it to us, by freeing us, on one side, from the miseries of this world, and on the other, by opening to us the entrance to a new world, the abode of peace and perfect felicity. What reason is there, then, to afflict ourselves so much?

Our being is composed of two substances, the one terrestrial, the other spiritual; whilst the first is dissolving, the other is being renewed. The one apparent, exterior, the only visible one; the other, invisible, formed after the image of its Creator, like Him, has neither form nor feature; nothing of that which distinguishes matter, and renders it evident to the senses. In the same manner that the body, being all matter, is subjected to the fatē of all that is matter, and perishable like itself; so the soul, associated to a nature intellectual and divine, is imperishable as itself. Death, then, can hurt only the flesh: it has disincumbered the soul from a burden foreign to it, from the dress in which it has played its part on the theatre of this life; from an impure alliance with divers elements to which it was enchained, and has restored it to its native beauty. What, then, is there in death so terrible? Before we arrive at the age of maturity, we must pass through the preceding stages, from infancy,—nay, from the very commencement of existence,—from the instant when, as yet only an unformed germ, deposited in the mother's womb, the infant waits, from day to day, the moment of emancipation, which shall give it to the light of the sun. So far does Nature foresee and provide for the wants of the being of whom, in her own good time, she intends to make a man. The moment arrives for him to leave his dark retreat: he does so apparently with regret, for in entering upon life, he seems to testify, by his tears, the grief with which he changes his mode of existence.

Is it, then, a misfortune to be born? to pass from infancy to youth? Still less can it be a misfortune to go from this miserable life, to the true life, into which we are introduced by death. Our first changes are only those connected with the progressive developement of a life which must terminate in death. The new change, then,



which death effects, is only the passage to a more desirable perfection. To complain of the necessity of dying is to accuse Nature of not having condemned us to perpetual infancy; the present time is but the infancy of life; its maturity, its perfection, is not in this world. Life is only a lengthened death; sleep the image of that death. "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren," says St. Paul to the Thessalonians, "concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others, which have no hope." If there be any legitimate sorrow, it is that which is born of penitence, on account of sin, or from a desire of life eternal, on account of the troubles of this which is present.

*On the Sleep of Death.*

#### GOOD OFFICES.

ACT towards others as you would they should act towards yourself. It is the same in life as in the midst of the waves; for every navigator there are the same sea, the same tempests, the same dangers to beware of. As long as you are borne on a tranquil surface, help those who have suffered shipwreck. Who can say that you will not be overtaken by the storm? You are not yet in port: the same conduct that you have shown to the unfortunate, will be shown to you, by your fellow-voyagers.

*Homily on the 25th Chapter of Matthew.*

#### THE PEACE-MAKER.

"*BLESSED are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God.*" To see God is a privilege above all others. To be the child of God is something still more happy! What is man? What is God? Yet the immense abyss which separates man from the divinity is crossed, in this appellation of Child of God! For the moment this glorious qualification is bestowed upon us, we are raised to the dignity of God himself,—we acquire a

right to the paternal heritage. Such is the recompense that attends us at the end of the combat. But what is this combat? If you are a peace-maker you will be introduced, by a glorious adoption, into the family of God. What is more sweet than peace? Whatever goods we possess, is it not peace that gives the relish to them all? without that there is no good. But what is a peace-maker? What is peace? The peace-maker is he who gives peace to another. Can we give that which we do not ourselves possess? Peace is love towards our neighbour, founded on charity. By this simple definition we do away with every thing that is in opposition to peace; with hatred, violence, envy, resentment, dissimulation, war, and all the miseries included in her train. Like precious balsams, the perfumes of which exhale themselves into distance, peace dispenses its sweet influences all around. Peace is to the soul what health is to the body; with the one there can be no disease, with the other, none of the violent or disgraceful passions which fill the mind with uneasiness, and the senses with disorder.

*On the Eight Beatitudes.*

#### PERFECTION OF VIRTUE.

TRUE virtue tends to unite itself to God, by imitating his nature, which is boundless. Hence virtue never droops, but continually aspires to mount upwards; not that it can ever arrive at absolute perfection, but it is always endeavouring to do so; agreeably to the precept, "*Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.*" We can never resemble him in every thing, but it is always desirable to acquire a portion of what is good in its nature, though we may not be able to obtain the whole.

Virtue does not consist in avoiding evil, through the fear of chastisement, like a slave; nor in doing good solely with a view to recompense, like a merchant carrying on his

traffic; but to do it without even thinking of the rewards promised to us for it in another life; without fearing any thing but estrangement from God; without desiring any thing but the sole good of knowing Him, and being united to Him, in his love.

*Life of Moses.*

PRAYER.

ALIKE ungrateful for the benefits we have received, and indifferent towards those we are still in expectation of, we neglect prayer, the only medium through which we can prove our gratitude to God. Who is it that has spread out the earth beneath our feet, opened paths to human industry across the waters, and hung the brilliant vault of the heavens above our heads? Who is it that directs my paths with the torch which enlightens me during the day? Who is it that makes the fountains spring up in the depths of the valleys? Who has dug out for our rivers the beds in which they are enclosed; has made the animal creation subservient to our necessities; has organized this vile dust; has given it at once life and intelligence; has engraved upon this handful of earth, of which I am composed, the resemblance of the divinity? and who, after this glorious image has been obscured and defaced by sin, who is it that has re-established it, in its pristine beauty?

We pray, but without reflecting on the sublime puissance of Him to whom we address our prayers! We degrade the majesty of the Divinity by the sordidness of our desires, and the abject nature of our affections. We present ourselves before God, like some poor wretch, who, possessing nothing in the world but a few paltry utensils of clay, should seek out his monarch, at the moment of his dispensing dignities and honours all around, and should then ask him to convert those utensils into something more suited to his desires.

We expose to the eyes of Him from whom no secrets are hidden, the disorderly inclinations to which we are subjected, not to obtain their cure, but to persuade him to connive at them; whilst we ask of him only such things as are likely to add to, and inflame them; and we murmur against him, when we fancy our prayers are not heard, as if it were a fault in him, not to be vindictive, proud, and avaricious, like ourselves.

“But is it then forbidden,” some will say, “to ask of God temporal goods, since he is equally the dispenser of them as of things eternal?” Yes, it is from his hand that they emanate; but it is not that they are valuable in themselves, that he gives them to those who ask them,—it is to inspire them with confidence to solicit things of real worth. God grants things of lesser import to our weakness, as a mother at first nourishes her babe with the milk of her breasts; in order to prepare it for more solid aliments, afterwards, in the proportions that its age and strength may require. With him they are only the first manifestations of that benevolence which promises us every substantial good, that we may be justified in asking of him. Is it not, then, a species of self-deception, to offer up our prayers to the Eternal, solely to ask of him sublunary and perishable things? of Him, the master of the heavens! to ask only the wealth of the earth! Of Him, the most high, to ask only things transitory and worthless! Of Him, the God who opens his immortal kingdom to us, to ask such ignoble acquisitions as we must, ere long, inevitably part with, and the very enjoyment of which, fugitive as it is, exposes us to so many dangers!

## PURITY OF HEART.

*"Blessed are the pure in heart ; for they shall see God."*

I FIND myself in the situation of a man who, from some eminence, contemplates a vast ocean. It is God himself, it is his immensity that I look upon ! But how is it possible to see God ? He is beyond the reach of our intelligence.— To see God, is to possess him, and with him immortal life, incorruptible eternity ; his inexhaustible felicity, his kingdom without end, his joys without alloy, his true light, his ravishing communion, his incommunicable glory ; in a word, the union of every good.

But how acquire this happiness, which it is impossible even to define or express ? What use is there in describing it in such magnificent terms, if at the same time that they inflame our desires they only show us the impossibility of attaining it. What, then ! Would the Lord propose it to us and exhort us to render ourselves worthy of it, if it were beyond our efforts ? Let us beware of imagining such a thing : without doubt the essence itself of his divine nature surpasses all our comprehension ; that is to say, we cannot embrace the plenitude of his perfections : but we see these same perfections in his works ; and that is enough to show us the sublime Architect who made them.

To whom then will it be given to see God ? To those who are pure in heart. Now, purity of heart is not beyond our reach. The kingdom of God, according to the expression of the Scriptures, is within us. O ye, in whom there is the least spark of desire to see the Sovereign Good, when ye shall be told, and with truth, that our feeble nature is incapable of seizing or comprehending this Divine Majesty, so greatly elevated above the heavens, be not cast down or discouraged ; you may see Him at least partially. You have Him in your heart, for purity of heart is but the impression of His divine beauty. It is

the mirror wherein are reflected the rays of that sun of justice, whose radiant light is too dazzling for mortal gaze. It is the ladder of Jacob, the chariot of fire, which carries the prophet far beyond the earth, even unto heaven. To shun vice is the first step by which we ascend; to practise virtue is the second.

*On the Eight Beatitudes.*

#### THE RESURRECTION.

THE resurrection is the re-establishment of our nature in its pristine state. Man, at his creation, was not subjected to old age, or infancy, or malady. It would be an injury to the goodness of God to imagine otherwise. It was not until he had rendered himself culpable, that his corrupted nature began to be sensible of infirmity. Since evils are the consequences of sin, it follows that they will also disappear with it; as a traveller, who, exposed to extreme heat or cold, feels the impression of it in every part of his frame, yet, when he comes into a moderate temperature, regains his natural state; so human life, at present agitated with the innumerable evils, both physical and moral, which sin has entailed upon it, will be ever affranchised from them all, when once it shall have touched the shore of eternal bliss.

*On the Soul and the Resurrection.*

#### SLAVERY.

“*I POSSESSED myself of servants and maids.*” Possessed, do you say? But who is the possessor of human beings, save God? By what right can any other claim possession of them? Those men that you say belong to you, has not God created them free? Command the brute creation, well and good, but do not degrade the image of God. Bend the beasts of the field beneath your yoke, make them your slaves, if you will; but are your fellow-men to be bought and sold at a price, like herds of cattle? And at what price?

Who can pay the value of a being created in the image of God? The whole world itself bears no proportion to the dignity of a soul on which the Most High has set the seal of his likeness. This world will perish, but the soul of man is immortal. Show me, then, your titles of possession. This strange privilege, whence have you received it? What is your own nature? Is it not the same with that of those whom you call your slaves? Have not they the same origin with yourself? Are they not born to the same destinies?

*On Ecclesiastes.*

#### THE SOUL.

IN vain may we endeavour to comprehend the nature of the human soul; being created after the image of God, it is incomprehensible as the Divine Essence itself. It would not be conformable to its prototype, if it were not so.

*On the Formation of Man.*

#### SUBJUGATION OF THE PASSIONS.

IF thou wilt exercise dominion, let it be over the ferocious beasts within thyself. "How!" you reply, "ferocious beasts within myself,—what do you mean?" I mean that ferocious beasts do indeed exist within you, and in great numbers. You are astonished at my language, but listen to me. Is not anger a ferocious beast? Are not revenge, avarice, fraud, impurity,—are they not ferocious beasts? Assuredly, and much more so than the dog, the bear, the viper, or the wolf. What do you gain by commanding without, if you are enslaved within?—to rule over the brute creation, when you are yourself ruled over by your passions? Begin, then, by being master of yourself. It can never be imputed to you as a crime that you may not be able to tame a lion, but to be unable to get the better of your anger is an unpardonable weakness.

*On the Formation of Man.*

## SAINT EPHRAIM, DEACON OF EDESSA.

BORN, — ; DIED, 379.

It has been said of St. Ephraim, that he was to the Church of Syria what St. Augustine was to that of Africa, and St. John Chrysostom to that of Greece. He was born at Nisbis, in Mesopotamia, of poor parents, but who were enlightened by the Christian faith, and proved their sincerity by confessing it before the judges, during the persecutions under Dioclesian. His temper was naturally hasty, and his boyhood was not free from the faults incidental to that time of life; but even then, his mind often turned to the consideration of spiritual things, though it was more in the form of doubt and disbelief, than of that firmness of faith of which his parents had given him the example: this was, at a more mature period of his life, and continued to be so even to its close, a subject of great self-reproach to him. The more progress he made in the knowledge of Divine things, and the more favoured he became in his communion with God, the more severely he upbraided himself, for ever having presumed to nourish doubts of the adorable Providence of the Creator of all things, in the direction of the works of His hands.



At the age of eighteen Ephraim was baptized; and preceding this ceremony, as was the salutary rule observed among the early Christians, by an earnest examination of his past life, and a confession of his sins, the impression made on his mind was such as to lay in him the foundation of that humility which ever afterwards formed the distinguishing feature of his character; manifesting itself, to his latest moment, in every word and action of his life, and exhibiting its traces in every page of the writings he has left behind him.

Shortly after his baptism, his resolution of implicit submission to the will of God in all things was put to the test by an incident he thus relates, in an account of the principal events of his life which he calls his "Confessions:"—"I was one day walking in the plains of Mesopotamia, when I met a shepherd, with whom I entered into conversation. In the course of it, he asked me whither I was going, and, on hearing my reply, he said, 'Young man, if you will take my advice, you will not go any further to-night; it is getting late; you had better come to my hut, and stay to-night with me.' His offer appeared so kind, that I was prevailed on to accept it; but, in the middle of the night, a troop of wolves came down upon us, and scattered the sheep in every direction. The shepherd, who had gone to bed drunk, slept so soundly, that he heard nothing of the noise and confusion among his flock. The owners of the sheep, however, sent him to prison,

the next day, on charge of having stolen them ; and, finding me with him, they summoned me also before the judge, on suspicion of being concerned in the supposed theft. It was in vain that I endeavoured to exculpate myself from the charge, by relating the circumstance that had brought me to the hut exactly as it happened ; it did not save me from being put into confinement.

Soon after two other prisoners arrived, one accused of adultery, the other of murder ; neither of them were any more guilty of the crimes laid to their charge than myself. Seven days passed away, when one night, as I was asleep, an angel appeared to me in a dream : ‘Open thy heart,’ said he to me, ‘to sentiments of piety, and thou wilt learn to know the secrets of Divine Providence. Give an account to thyself of thy thoughts and of thine actions, and thine own conscience will then tell thee whether or not thou art now punished undeservedly. It is the same with the prisoners who are detained here with thee, and who appear to be suffering unjustly.’ On waking, I felt myself powerfully impressed with this dream, and, according to the advice I had received in it, I began to retrace in memory the errors of my past life ; and I recollected that in this very country, where I had been thus dragged to prison, I had formerly in the night driven the cow of a poor man away among the mountains, where it was devoured by wild beasts. I related my dream to my companions in misfortune, and exhorted them to take counsel by it. The next

day we were all summoned before the judge. These men were found innocent of the crime of which they were accused, but having been convicted of divers others, some on their own confession, and some on the deposition of witnesses, they submitted to the sentence they had incurred; as for myself, I was set at liberty, the real stealer of the sheep being discovered."

During the seventy days which Ephraim passed in prison, he had sufficient time for serious reflections; and, yielding to the impression these solitary moments made upon his imagination and natural sensibility of temperament, his first thought, on regaining his liberty, was to estrange himself entirely from the world, and devote the remainder of his life wholly to God. His resolution was strengthened by the conversations he was in the habit of holding with some pious hermits, who lived among the mountains in the vicinity of Nisbis; and he soon began to follow the example they gave him of austerity of living, continual prayer, and meditations of the Scriptures, to which he devoted the vigils of the night, as well as the day. In these pious occupations he found peace; all the natural hastiness of his temper disappeared, and he became more and more meek and lowly of heart, as he contemplated more and more devoutly the great pattern of all humility.

One day, at the termination of a very rigid fast, which had almost exhausted his strength, the young man, who, at the hour appointed, was

bringing him the meal of which he stood so much in need, stumbled, and broke the earthen jar that contained it; he was distressed, and ashamed at his awkwardness, but Ephraim smiled, and said to him, "Do not let this trifle grieve you, my brother; since my supper cannot come to me, it is for me to go to it;" and seating himself by the spot where the broken fragments lay, he cheerfully contented himself with picking up the remains of his meagre fare.

It has been justly remarked that it is in small things the disposition is truly seen. On important occasions, when the eyes of others are turned upon us, pride will assist us in disguising our sentiments, and enable us to assume the appearance of a generosity or elevation of soul far from our real feeling; but it deserts us in those petty vexations which are perpetually starting up to try us in the every-day occurrences of life. Yet it is these things which, better than more pompous ones, show us really what spirit we are of—whether we are Christians or worldlings—disciples of Him who knew in all things how to suffer, or of a world which is impatient of every thing that restrains or thwarts its inclinations.

One of St. Ephraim's chief associates was Julian, the hermit, whose life he afterwards wrote as a model of excellence; nevertheless, his admiration of the virtues of this devout man did not blind him to what might be deemed a weakness, or at least a want of judgment, in his venerable friend. Looking at his books one day, he saw that wherever the name

of Jesus occurred, the letters which formed it were nearly obliterated: he asked him the reason 'of this peculiarity. "You know," answered Julian, "that when the woman who was a sinner, drew near to our Divine Master, she bathed his feet with her tears. Thus, also, wherever I meet with the name of my Saviour, I wash it with my tears, in the hope of obtaining from Him, in the same manner, the remission of my sins." "May He deign in His infinite goodness to grant it to you," replied Ephraim; "nevertheless, for the future, be advised by me, and spare your books."

Yet of Ephraim himself, so profoundly was he penetrated with a sense of contrition for his own offences, and of the lost and unworthy state of human nature in general, that it has been said by one of his contemporaries, St. Gregory of Nyssa, that his writings were steeped in tears; nevertheless, he knew how to distinguish between a rational piety and a superstitious practice; and also how to reconcile the most profound retirement and the greatest austerities, with the discharge of such social duties as might still come within the reach of his benevolence; hence, during the years that he passed in the deserts around Nisbis, he afforded religious instructions to all the poor whom he met with in his wanderings, and frequently changed the particular spot of his abode, to make himself more extensively useful among them.

When Nisbis, after being frequently besieged, finally fell into the hands of the Persians, Ephraim

buried himself in solitude in the environs of Edessa; but the fame of his piety soon reached the ears of the inhabitants, and he was earnestly solicited by them to take upon him the functions of deacon in their church, and to preach the Gospel to them. However great his humility, he could not but hear the call of the Lord in this invitation, and, with this conviction, it was not for him to refuse to listen to it. From the moment of his assuming the sacred functions, aware that he who would impart spiritual good to others, must, in order to do it effectually, begin by receiving it himself, he applied with increased assiduity to the study of the Book of Life, and renewed his supplications, with still more fervour, to the throne of grace for assistance. He might be said indeed to pass incessantly from prayer to preaching, and from preaching to prayer; in the same manner he divided his time between the church and his beloved hermitage, to which he frequently retired to commune with himself and with his God; far from the noise of the world, and to give himself up, secure from interruption, to holy meditations and sacred study, with the fruits of which he would then return to Edessa, to distribute them among his people.

Ephraim possessed no advantage from the aid of what is generally understood by the term learning, understanding no language but his own, the Syriac; nevertheless, his piety, his zeal, his incessant study, and, let us always add, the assistance of the Holy Spirit, never withheld when humbly and sincerely

asked for in prayer, enabled him, both as a preacher and a writer, to develop the meaning of the Holy Scriptures, the duties of Christian morality, and the errors and impieties of different heresies, with a fervour and truth that carried conviction to the hearts of his hearers, and still render his works of the highest practical value; even though handed down to us under the triple disadvantage of being translated from the original Syriac into Greek, from the Greek into Latin, and from that into the modern languages.

The peculiar characteristic of Ephraim is his profound pathos and the sensibility of his affections. He is among the Fathers what Young is among the poets. The emptiness of human grandeur, death, judgment, eternity,—such were the subjects on which he perpetually descanted: familiarized with the wild grandeur of solitude, and the impressive aspects of the tomb, his thoughts are lofty, his imagery solemn, his style elevated and fertile. “He was skilled,” says John Chrysostom, in speaking of him, and whose opinion succeeding writers have done little more than re-produce, in other words, “in awakening consciences slumbering in lukewarmness; inconsoling those whom misfortune had overwhelmed: in guiding the penitent, and repulsing the heretic. His conduct was an example of every virtue, and his heart seemed to be the abode of the Holy Spirit.”

The discourses of St. Ephraim long continued to be read in the churches of Syria, immediately after

the Scriptures, and he is still revered in that country, under the title of "the Doctor of the World." His prose writings have been published in various editions, among which is a magnificent one, in six folio volumes by the learned Cardinal Quirini. He likewise composed, according to Sozomeneus, nearly a hundred thousand verses; chiefly hymns, which he caused to be set to the same airs as those of Harmonius, that had for two hundred years, from the attraction of their music, been popular in Syria. Ephraim, grieved at hearing these melodies made the vehicle for conveying deistical sentiments, unsuspectedly, among the people, had soon the gratification of finding them replaced by his own, which breathed the sublimities of the Christian faith, in strains well worthy of making them a delightful part of Christian worship.

The longing after spiritual improvement that formed the predominant feature of his soul, inspired Ephraim with so ardent a desire to profit by the conversation and advice of Basil, that he resolved to go to Cæsarea to see him. On his arrival, he straight proceeded to the church, where Basil was at that moment preaching. Struck by his garb and his profound attention, Basil immediately felt persuaded that his new auditor was Ephraim, to whose piety he was no stranger. Immediately after the sermon, he sent for him, and asked him, by means of an interpreter, if he was not that well-known servant of Jesus Christ. "I am," he replied, "that same



Ephraim, a benighted wanderer in the road to heaven;" then melting into tears, he exclaimed, in the most affecting tones, "O Father, have pity upon a miserable sinner, and deign to guide him in the right way!" Basil threw himself into his arms, and embraced him as a fellow-labourer, in the same vineyard; he then took him to his own house, where these holy men passed some days together in affectionate and edifying communion, and when, at length, they parted, it would have been difficult to say which had derived most benefit from the meeting.

Ephraim had too soon only the recollection of Basil's excellences to console him for his loss, as shortly after he returned to Edessa, he received the tidings of his death. Looking on this event as an intimation to him to prepare for his own, he secluded himself still more closely from the world; but a cruel famine, which desolated great part of Mesopotamia and Syria, including Edessa in its frightful visitation, drew him from his retreat to minister to the necessities of the province, as well as of the city. His pious appeals to the charity of the rich were so effectual, that it almost seemed as if the happy age of the Infant Church was restored, when Christians possessed all things in common. So abundant were the donations of which he was made the depository, that sufficient remained in his hands, after having supplied the poor with food, to establish a temporary hospital for the relief of those who were attacked with the pestilential fever, which is always the

dreadful attendant of famine. He engaged the public cloisters of Edessa for this purpose, and placed in them three hundred beds, as well for strangers as for the inhabitants. He took up his abode among the sufferers, administered their medicines to them with his own hands, and performed the last offices to their remains, when they were no more. He continued these pious duties a whole year, at the end of which time the disorder had nearly left the city; but his bodily strength succumbed under the claims his mental energy had made upon it. He was himself seized with the fever, and, retiring to his cell, calmly prepared to meet his last moment. His disciples, and many of the inhabitants of Edessa, thronged round his couch; and it was in their presence that he wrote his last testament, which is such a model of piety, humility, and patient poverty, that it cannot be read without awakening sentiments beneficial to the soul.

“I, Ephraim,” thus it opens, “am about to die. Know, all of you, that I write this testament, that you may remember me in your prayers after my death. I feel my strength give way; the thread of my days is ready to break: I see near me those who will carry my mortal remains to their last resting-place. A hireling, called to the service of the Father of the family, I have fulfilled my task: a pilgrim and a stranger upon the earth, I at last see myself at the end of my journey. The lictors of death advance, unpitying, to drag to his doom the malefactor who

is already cut off from human society. Fruitless tears! sighs which can no longer make themselves heard! Alas, nothing remains for me but the last dread judgment! . . . . .

“I declare that, in quitting this world, I possess nothing whatever of my own. I have nothing, therefore, my brethren, to offer to you in dying, but my counsels. The first, which I cannot sufficiently endeavour to impress upon your minds, is, that you all live together in perfect union. Love one another with cordial affection, and always bear in mind that charity is the foundation of all virtues—the spirit of dissension, envy, and slander, belongs to the Prince of Darkness.

“Some may, perhaps, blame in me the warmth with which I have repulsed the wolves of heresy, who sought, under sheep’s clothing, to devour our flock. It is true that too much mildness cannot be shown at first, in leading back into the way of truth those who, by a natural restlessness, a love of novelty, or the pride of self-love, may have been seduced into heretical opinions. But when we have exhausted all the remedies which charity prescribes to us respecting them, and find that they still persist in error, is it not then incumbent upon us to arm ourselves with the zeal of which Jesus Christ himself gave us an example, when the glory of his Father was any way brought in question?

“As to you, my dear brethren, who are bound to me by the ties of a pure faith and a sincere charity,

I call upon you now to be the witnesses and depositories of my faith, as I also would be of yours. I protest, before the Lord God Almighty, that Jesus Christ crucified has been the first object of my affections, and that I have constantly adored him as the author of my salvation, and the source of all the blessings which God bestows upon men. I have submitted my reason to an implicit belief in all the points of our holy faith, and I would have shed every drop of my blood, sooner than deny one of the truths received by the Church of Christ.

“If we ought to distrust our mind, and have no feelings for it but those of contempt for its weakness, how much more ought we to despise the body, yet more weak and miserable! hence, I conjure you, my dear brethren, to render no honours to mine. It is not that I should not wish it to be interred among those of the faithful, but I entreat you to let it be as the least among you.

“If it be right that you should treat my body thus, you cannot annex more importance to my raiment, and to what may have belonged to me. The testimonies of affection we lavish on such objects are the weaknesses of nature, not the fruits of reason,—we seek, in the relics of the person we have lost, that consolation which we ought only to seek in God.

“I recommend it to you not to make any funereal pomp for me. Such luxury belongs neither to the penitence of a sinner, the modesty of a Christian,

nor the humility of a deacon. I forbid you, therefore, to light torches round my corpse to do it honour. Wrap me in the cloth and tunic I now wear: there will be no great loss incurred, in so doing.

“Nevertheless, if custom and your affection should decidedly incline you to incur some expense at my interment, in token of your regard for me, let it be, I pray you, in this form:—let the money be employed in assisting the widow, instructing the orphan, and consoling the afflicted: in nourishing, lodging, and clothing the poor. It is in such works that profusion is the best economy, for those who have eternity in view. I have seen Christians give abundant alms, but I never saw any one who was ruined in consequence of doing so; lay up for yourselves, then, my brethren, lay up treasure in heaven.

“When you assemble yourselves together, to offer up your prayers before God, be careful to acquit yourselves of holy things in a holy manner. To pray without attention is not to pray,—nay, it is to offend the majesty of the Most High; let me, then, earnestly recommend this attention in the funeral orations you may celebrate on my account; why should your attention be distracted during the performance of these ceremonies, when you recollect that it is possible they may be repeated the day after for yourselves?

“Love me as I have loved you: if my memory

be indeed dear to you, remember how earnestly I now repeat my entreaty that you will live united among yourselves. Persevere in the faith that Jesus Christ and his Apostles have taught us: this instruction is all that I have to leave you."

As soon as Ephraim had finished his testament, he blessed his disciples and those around him; his hour was come, and he passed peaceably away from this world, to the kingdom of heaven, promised to "the poor in spirit."

The works left by St. Ephraim, at the time of his death, consisted of divers treatises against the heretics; a Commentary upon the Old and New Testament; Lives of the Patriarchs and of distinguished characters in the Scriptures; Sacred Songs and Poems; among which are ninety-five funereal chants, sung to this day in the churches of Syria, in their offices for the dead; and a great number of Discourses and Meditations upon the doctrines and morality of the Christian faith. Of these, unfortunately, a great part are lost, among which is much to be regretted the chief part of his Commentary on the Old and New Testament: as, from his residence in the very theatre of the great events to which the prophecies relate, he had such opportunities of collecting the traditions concerning them, as must have made his commentaries peculiarly interesting.

# SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS

OF

## SAINT EPHRAIM.

### ANGER.

WHAT a chain of evils does that man prepare for himself who is a slave to anger ! He is the murderer of his own soul ; yea, to the letter he is so, for he lives in a continual torment. He is devoured by an inward fire, and his body partakes of his sufferings. Terror reigns around him ; every one dreads lest the most innocent word, the most trifling occurrence, may give him a pretext for quarrel, or rouse him into fury. A passionate man is alike odious to God and man, and is insupportable even to himself.

*On Virtues and Vices.*

### CHARITY.

GOD is charity, and he who lives in charity, lives in God ; inaccessible to fear, for charity casteth out fear ; free from contempt, free from rancour, descending to a level with all, giving up continually to others. Far from attempting to injure the reputation of his neighbour, he will not admit a slanderer into any intimacy with him. Envy and violence are unknown to him. The misfortunes of others afflict him, and inspire in him no other sentiment than the desire to relieve them. To him no man is a stranger, for he regards all as brothers. Patient and resigned under trials, he is merciful to others, and severe only on himself.

*On Compunction.*

## CHARITY IN DEPORTMENT.

HE who shows hatred against the sinner, instead of exercising it only against the sin, condemns himself.

*On Compunction.*

## CHOICE OF SOCIETY.

FLY all commerce with corrupt society ; not through hatred to the persons of those of whom it may consist, but from unwillingness to associate yourself with their vices. If you are under the necessity of living habitually with luke-warm Christians, who have no enthusiasm in good, redouble your vigilance over yourself, as well to win them to Jesus Christ by the force of your example, as to prevent yourself from being led away, to your own loss, by their dangerous indifference.

*On Vigilance.*

## CONDUCT OF LIFE.

THE Christian ought to prescribe it to himself as a rule in the events of life, when any thing fortunate happens to him, to expect that affliction may not be far off. Is he, on the contrary, visited with some sorrowful event, let him hope for it to be closely followed by some subject of joy. Let us take example from those that voyage on the ocean ; do they, because they are assailed by some furious storm, or impetuous winds, relinquish the hope of saving themselves?—No ; they resist the tempest, they wait the return of calm, and when it comes they still keep a careful watch, that they may not be surprised by fresh dangers. Thus ought we to act, and to be prepared for all events. He who expects misfortune confronts it, when it presents itself, without being alarmed at its aspect, as by something strange and unlooked for. When it comes, let us throw ourselves into the arms of God, that we may not be overwhelmed by it.



If He sends us prosperity, let us still be prepared for the tempest, and not forget, in the excess of our enjoyments, that the day of affliction may be near at hand.

*Religious Meditations.*

#### CONTAGIOUS DISEASE.

WHAT an immense trophy for Death! a whole people, kings and governors of provinces! what new victories for this terrific conqueror of the human race! The earth is agitated; the distant isles, the seas afar off, have felt the shock. Death has opened a vast gulf, into which he precipitates all ages. Seated upon heaps of dead, as upon a lofty throne, he sees himself surrounded by an innumerable train of victims, not one of whom is destined to escape his stroke. Every house is turned into a sepulchre, where he who still breathes lies stretched by the side of him who is no more: here are habitations loaded with lifeless forms, there are others without a single inmate. The road that leads to the burial-places is the only one frequented, that which conducts to the city is untrodden. Every thing is abandoned—houses, occupations, labours of the fields. One sole thought possesses the mind of every one; it is that he must die; it may be to-day—to-morrow he will be dead: night and day is death before his eyes. Every one is anxious to make arrangements for the tomb which is to receive him; the most voluptuous bed has no attractions in his eyes; he thinks only of the funereal couch which is awaiting him. The poor have no other care; the rich, for it, abandon the gold they so greedily amassed. By force of numbers, the dead even jostle against each other in the streets, as they are carried to their common place of oblivion. The ravages of contagion are such, that ground is wanting for those whom it has already destroyed. No more are to be found to bear away the victims; they lie here and

there in the streets, deprived of rites of sepulture, and abandoned to the corruption they exhale.

The malady propagating itself by the very cares the dying require, and the image of death remaining incessantly before the eyes of the living, an universal despair takes place. There being no longer a hope of preserving life, every thought is turned to death, and those who are yet unstricken would have deemed it a consolation to die sooner, in order that they might have had the rites of sepulture. From day to day the earth, infected with the poisons of the pestilence, corrupts the air with destructive vapours, which ripen the germs of contagion around. The flower of youth sinks beneath it—all that is beautiful decays; the human form is no longer to be recognised—no longer is there any difference of conditions. Such is the merciless harvest of Death; he cuts down all alike. The infant taken out of its cradle perishes in the arms of its mother, on the breast that nourished it. The young man at work in the fields, the virgin secluded beneath the parental roof, are alike cut off. The wedded pair, just returned from pledging their vows at the foot of the altar, see their nuptial bed changed to a funereal couch, and songs of joy give place to cries of grief, to lamentation, and to mourning. One flies far from the city, and perishes on his way; another comes to implore a resting-place in an adjoining house,—he is answered from within by the groan of the departing. The lands left uncultivated are already changed into a frightful solitude; the flocks wander about without shepherds. The churches are silent; the priest, and the faithful who officiated at his side, are gone together, to give in their last account. No more consolation, no more support to expiring age; all is the prey of Death. Heart-rending sight! appalling visitation! frightful, frightful death! yet there is one thing most frightful of all, that is, the death of the sinner! O

Thou! my only refuge! All-powerful God! God of Mercies, we will not cease to implore thy clemency! Have pity upon us; our sins have provoked Thy wrath: the measure of our iniquities was full. Thou chastisest us by these terrible scourges; we are sinners—call us to repentance!

*On the Plague in Syria\*.*

#### CONTENTMENT.

WHERE God has placed you, there remain. It is not by change of place that you will impose silence on your heart, but by watching incessantly over its movements.

*On a Spiritual Life.*

#### DEATH.

THE thought of death is imprinted in the core of every human heart. Every one knows that he must die: the Infidel is as well convinced of it as the Christian; but the Infidel dreads it,—he turns away from it, because he sees in it only the termination of his pleasures,—the consequence of his having indulged in them forms no part of his consideration. The Christian, on the contrary, habitually nourishes the thought of his departure, because it teaches him to avoid the punishments denounced upon the sinner, and to labour for the recompenses which await the just, after their dissolution.

He who thinks the least of death is precisely the person

\* This eloquent description becomes still more affecting, when we recollect that the writer of it himself fell a victim to the disease he has so forcibly depicted—a victim, happily for him, to his charitable offices in the cause of suffering humanity. At a time when a similar visitation is continually ravaging divers parts of Europe, it would be well if, instead of running from one place to another on the rumour of its approach, as if by so doing we could escape the appointed will of God, we were to remain obedient at our posts; intent only on being found well employed, whenever and in whatever form our final summons may arrive.

who has the most cause to dread it. The more he enjoys this life, the more anxious he is to avoid the idea that it will come to an end, and that in losing it, he must likewise lose all the possessions and the pleasures which have cost him so dear. It would force him, moreover, to become prudent, to practise temperance, and to place his hopes elsewhere than in a frail and perishable existence. — But when he shall really be no more, who then will possess those treasures of which he has been so insatiable? Not even kings are exempt from anxiety and chagrin, when they think of those who are to ascend the throne after them. Into whose hands will pass these vast accumulations of gold and silver? these magnificent robes, these rich stuffs, these sumptuous equipages, these troops of servants, or of slaves? these palaces incrustured with marble and precious stones, these tables, these sideboards loaded with the most delicious wines, these perfumed waters, these exquisite odours? Such are the thoughts which alternately fill them with sadness and with terror!

In vain old age, bending the body towards the earth, brings us nearer the contemplation of the tomb into which we are about to descend; we think only of accusing life, for becoming an insupportable burden to us,—we turn our eyes from the grave, but without lifting them up to heaven. Still the inevitable moment will arrive, when we must give up every thing, and set out alone, abandoned by all, degraded by death; given up to confusion, despoilment, absolute nakedness; without attendants, without defence, without even power of voice to ask for aid; forced to quit every thing without being prepared, without even expecting it. Surprised when we were least thinking of it, on a day, in an hour, when nothing of the sort was anticipated. To die, too, just when we were delivering ourselves up to the most flattering hopes, when we were occupied with fresh

wealth, and new pleasures, without any uneasiness for the morrow! But behold, at a single stroke, every thing is taken away! an attack of fever,—and in one night all is over. The victims are carried off, bound hand and foot, as a malefactor given up to his sentence. Frightful loneliness! overwhelming thought! Whither are we going to be dragged? When we go into countries which we have never before visited, how anxious we are to provide ourselves with guides, with directions for our route. Alas! how much more do we want them for this new, this unexplored country, from which no traveller has ever yet returned! Your hour has struck,—yours, your own, not that of another person,—it is you, yourself, who have to set off on this journey to eternity—terrible moment! Dark and unknown road!—how is it that no one returns to describe it to us! Awful and profound mystery: vainly do we endeavour to penetrate it.

*On Death.*

#### DEATH OF THE FAITHFUL.

WHAT admirable wisdom in the dispensations of the Almighty! He has sown the present life with tribulations, to make us more exquisitely sensible of the ineffable joys of the life to come! In creating us immortal, he has nevertheless taxed our immortality with death,—but with only temporary death. A death which detains us only one moment under its dominion, that we may be affranchised from it, immediately after, for ever. No; there is no death for those who die in Christ, there is only sleep. For them death is the promised haven, which affords them shelter from every storm. Can they, then, dread the arrival of that which for ever sets them free from sin, and all its cruel snares?

O my Saviour! how can I bless thee with sufficient

ardour, for having given us thy death as the pledge of our own immortal life ! thy resurrection as the earnest of that which Thou hast promised to ourselves ! Let the sepulchre call us,—we will wait in peace, for the moment when thy powerful voice shall command our dust to rise and join itself to immortal life, to celebrate Thy praises throughout eternity.

*Meditations on Death.*

#### DEATH AND SIN.

DEATH and Sin disputed one day which was most powerful. Death boasted of the despotism he exercised over all mortals, none of whom could resist his voice. Sin vaunted the facility with which she could, whenever she pleased, cause them to fall into the greatest disorders, and commit the most monstrous crimes. “And by what right dost thou, O Death,” she cried, “insult alike the just and the unjust? They all equally belong to the God who made them. It is not from thee, but from Him alone, that they receive their summons to give up their lives.” “Vile deceiver,” Death replied, “all men are free to fall into thy snares, or to avoid them, but no one is free to elude my laws.”

*Meditations on Death.*

#### EVIL-SPEAKING.

WHEN we hear the truth ridiculed, or a worthy person ill-spoken of, and undertake not the defence either of one or the other, surely our silence is criminal. In listening to slanderous tales, or irreverent jests, without reproofing him who utters them, do we not authorize him to imagine we approve them? In such cases God will punish alike him who utters the ill, and him who listens to it. The leprosy which Miriam, the prophetess, was struck with for her uncharitable censure of Moses, on his marriage with an Egyptian

woman, teaches us how horrible a crime calumny is in the sight of the Lord. Her malady, exterior and apparent, was the type of the interior contagion this vice produces in the soul.

*On Slander.*

#### FEAR OF GOD.

MOSES was filled with the fear of God, and hence it was that the world and the elements were submitted to him. The empire which Joshua and the prophet Elias obtained over all nature, originated in the fear with which they themselves were penetrated of the Lord, who resided in their hearts as upon his own throne. All created things revered, in the persons of these, his servants, the power of the Most High. Who fears God, immediately becomes himself an object of reverence to all nature. Who fears God, will find himself elevated above the terrors and menaces of this world,—they are for him only vain phantoms, which he despises, and speedily disperses. It is not for him to turn pale, at the sight of death,—death is to be dreaded only by those whom it deprives of every thing.

We are afraid of ferocious animals, only because we neither know, nor fear, nor love the Lord. O man, void of faith and courage, thou tremblest at an insect,—thou, who fearest not either God or his word! Blind that thou art! thou knowest not what power resides in the fear of God. Daniel feared the Lord, and behold,—the famished lions venture not to touch him. Our holy martyrs feared the Lord, and the most cruel tortures had not the power to shake their fortitude.

*On Free Will.*

#### FREE WILL.

FREE will is to us as the hand which can reach every kind of fruit. Adam was free to pluck the poisoned apple, and we are free to gather the remedy.

*On Free Will.*

## HUMILITY.

VAIN is every endeavour without humility. Pride labours to domineer over all, and lays a snare for every one, in that way which is peculiar to each. The wise, the strong, the beautiful, the ingenious, all are exposed to danger from that in which they excel. The Lord, knowing our danger, hath set humility as our guard, saying, "When ye have done all, say, We are unprofitable servants." Do those who labour abundantly in the ministry glory over those of a more still and quiet turn? behold, the Lord commends Mary sitting at his feet, as having chosen the good part. Are the sedate inclined to glory over the active? behold the Son of man came to minister. To be lifted up, is to have a fleshly mind; and if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die. When thou canst bear grievous things, against thy will, yet willingly, know that thou hast made proficiency in humility. Through pride the Pharisee was condemned; through humility the Publican was exalted, with whom may the Lord deign to rank us in his kingdom, along with all the just.

*Homilies.*

## INCOMPREHENSIBILITY OF GOD.

THE nature of God is impenetrable. Bounded in our intelligence, we do not even comprehend ourselves. What an enigma to us is the soul! Can he who is ignorant of himself, reason upon the nature of the Being who has made him? The Creator is above all our conceptions; whoever seeks to explain His essence, degrades, instead of honouring it. Happy he who adores Him in silence, sings His praises, and worships His perfection. When the very seraphs are mute before Him, shall man, corrupt and sinful, presume to speak of Him, whose immensity fills the heavens,



the earth, and the seas! Every where the Divinity may be traced in his works,—every where He himself is hidden from our eyes. We imagine we have formed an idea of Him, but when we would analyze it, lo! it escapes us. From the summit to which we raise ourselves, the better to contemplate his attributes, we fall back into the lowest depth of the valley, crushed beneath the weight of His Divine Majesty. We cannot even find words to express the thoughts we may form of Him: he is as a bottomless ocean, divested of shores, which it is equally impossible to sound, or to traverse.

Neither can we comprehend the nature of the Son, any more than of the Father. Let us be contented with knowing what He has thought fit to reveal to us, from His own mouth during His stay on earth . . . . .

The wise men of the East, who came to worship Him in the manger, asked not who He was, or whence He came,—they prostrated themselves before Him, in silence, and laid their presents at His feet. Follow their example: let it be enough for you to know that He is seated in the highest heaven; and, restraining all inquiries of curiosity, offer up to Him your good works, as the marks of your faith. The utmost height that the most sublime genius, in any age, has attained in his inquiry into the nature of God, is the acknowledgment that it is incomprehensible. That which can be measured is not infinite; if you could measure the immensity of the Supreme Being, you would be greater than that Being itself.

*On Faith.*

#### LOVE.

BLESSED is the man who possesses love, and with it departs to God: for He, knowing his own, will receive him into his bosom: he shall be a companion of angels, and reign

with Christ. By love, God the Word came upon earth; by it, paradise has been opened to us, and an entrance has been shown to all into heaven. Being enemies to God, by love we were reconciled. We may justly say that God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God.

*Homilies.*

MAN ABSORBED IN TERRESTRIAL THINGS. —

WHAT a contradiction is man! what activity he exerts to procure the things of a moment; what ardour in the search of some evanescent object, yet what lethargy he suffers himself to fall into, when the one thing needful is concerned! No attention is too great for him to give to his temporal prosperity; the important affair of his salvation is the only one respecting which he does not give himself any trouble. If any thing happens to the horse he rides, he is unhappy; if he incurs the risk of losing his own soul, he cares nothing about it. He scales the loftiest mountains, he turns the courses of rivers, he plunges into the abysses of the ocean, he pierces the thickest forests and the darkest caverns: he is as a god upon the earth,—he gathers the waters together, he lifts them up, he suspends them in the air. He tries to rival the Divinity, and make the prodigies of his industry supply the power of the Creator. What discoveries in art, in science, does he not make! his table alone displays all the accumulated delights of a terrestrial paradise. But speak to him of the most serious truths, of the last judgment, of the solemn account he will soon have to give of his life in this world, and he goes to sleep,—he dreams,—he wakes up again,—but it is only to run after new gains, to devise new means of increasing or preserving his perishable wealth. With this object in view, he is ready to start off in an instant, to traverse sea and land,—it is only the way to church that he neither knows nor cares about. Nor is

it merely his own energies that he thus employs : he would render all around him equally subservient to his acquisitions. Has he servants, his haughtiness would bend them under the hardest yoke of slavery ; for him the workman is never sufficiently diligent, the overseer never sufficiently severe : and, to complete his pride and presumption, though born of yesterday, he wishes to equal in knowledge Him who is before the ages,—he interrogates the order of nature, speaks of it as if it was the work of his own hands ; dares to measure its laws by his own calculations, and to limit the power of Him by whom alone his own existence is continued, from one instant to another !

*Commentary on the Sacred Writings.*

#### NECESSITY OF TEMPTATIONS.

God permits all of us to be exposed to temptations, to put our integrity to the proof. If we were never to experience them, we should, probably, carry ourselves with excessive severity towards those who may have yielded to their force ; and, for want of knowing the power of the enemy, we might be led into offensive and vain-glorious comparisons, with respect to our own strength.

*On the Christian Life.*

#### PEACE-MAKERS.

THOSE who, by indiscreet comments and tale-bearing, foment division among their associates, draw down upon themselves the animadversions of heaven and earth,—but those who soften grievances, and soothe angry spirits, obtain the glorious title of children of God.

*On Compunction.*

## PEARL OF PRICE.

JESUS CHRIST compares his kingdom to a pearl of infinite value, which must be acquired at any price. What does he do who wishes to find a pearl, of the most valuable description, at the bottom of the sea? He strips himself completely, plunges in, and remains in the water, till he makes himself master of it. Such is the true image of the Christian, who would acquire this inestimable treasure. He ought to forsake every thing, despoil himself of all, and watch incessantly, that he may not run the risk of losing it.

*Exhortation to a Spiritual Life.*

## PRESUMPTION.

MANKIND have in all ages desired to pluck at the forbidden tree, and, like Adam, they have only gathered from it the fruit of death. I speak of those who seek to penetrate with presumptuous curiosity into the nature of the Divine Being, or set themselves against his holy ordinances.

*Commentary on Genesis.*

## PRIDE.

PRIDE may be compared to a lofty, but rotten tree: whoever ascends the perished branches, is certain of a severe fall.

*Maxims of Piety.*

## REPENTANCE.

BITTER in their bud, fruits gain sweetness as they advance to their maturity; so it is with the exercises of penitence,—they begin by being bitter, but they end by growing sweet.

*Meditations.*

## RESENTMENT.

IF you once give your heart leave to keep up a vindictive remembrance of injuries, it will become the seat of anger,

sorrow, and vexation. The road which the vindictive man loves to track is one that leads to death. The way to efface from our breasts the slightest resentment, or even recollection of the injuries we may have received, is to think seriously of the God who sees us, and the death that is waiting for us.

*Ascetic Discourse.*

#### SALUTARY TEARS.

“*BLESSED are those who weep,*” says Jesus Christ. Not those who weep the death of their relations or their friends; the decay of their family, or the ruin of their fortune,—but blessed are they who weep over their sins, and lament the wanderings by which they have been led away from the road to heaven.

*On Compunction.*

#### SELF-ACCUSATION.

Two thoughts incessantly occupy my whole soul, and plunge it into the most mortal terrors. The first is, the long train of sins which I have never ceased to commit since I have come into the world, during the whole course of my life; the second is, the awful account which will be required of them from me at the day of judgment.

Melancholy contrast! my faculties, weakened by age, have lost their vigour, but my passions burn in my soul with unabated fire: my body, bent under the weight of years, with difficulty drags itself along, but my heart retains all the impetuosity of its desires. Such as I was in my youth, such I am in my grey hairs, and my last years are like those that have long passed away. Death will soon overtake me: then comes the resurrection, then the dreaded judgment,—then the final doom reserved for sinners!

*On Sin.*

## SELF-EXAMINATION.

THE merchant never suffers a single day to elapse without taking an account of what he may have gained or lost, in the course of it: let us do the same by our souls. Let not one evening pass over our heads, without our examining how our spiritual account stands; let us enter into the inmost recesses of our heart, and ask of ourselves, “In what have I offended God during the day? have I indulged in idle conversation? have I sinned by neglecting to perform my duties? have I tried too hardly the patience of any of my brethren? have I injured the reputation of any one by my words? When I have seemed to take a part in holy things, has not my mind been occupied with the affairs of this world? When the concupiscence of the flesh has presented its dangerous poisons to me, have I not voluntarily inclined my lips towards the cup?”—and under whatever of these, or other heads we may find ourselves on the debtor side, let us lament over our transgression from our inmost souls, and labour to make up to-morrow what we may have lost to-day.

*On Penitence.*

## TEMPTATIONS.

IF men will not load a beast of burden with more than it can bear, will God, the most merciful of masters, suffer us to be tempted beyond what we are able to resist?

*On the Mercy of God.*

## THE THOUGHTS.

THINK of good, that you may avoid thinking of evil. The mind of man cannot for one moment remain in a state of inactivity.

*Fourth Exhortation to the Solitaries.*

## TRIBULATIONS.

THERE are in human life two sorts of tribulation, from which no person under the sun can be exempted ; one from God, the other from the world. It is impossible, as long as we are in our present state of existence, to escape either the one or the other. The sorrows that come from the world are grievous, and without consolation ; those that come from God are accompanied by the hope of eternal life.

*On Vigilance.*

## VAIN-GLORY.

THE enemy of our souls attacks us even in our very virtues, and scatters vain-glory among them, as tares among the wheat, which they smother. There is no sin more fatal than this ; it destroys even the gifts of God, and dries up the germs of good. Let us never forget that the day will come when all our virtues will be tried as by fire, and that this fire humility alone will be able to withstand.

*On Pride.*

## VANITY OF WORLDLY THINGS.

WHERE are now the famed potentates whose power extended over almost the whole earth ? Who is it that has made them descend from their lofty height, and despoiled them of all their treasures ? Whither are gone those vaunted heroes, whose achievements drew forth such expressions of admiration ; those learned prodigies of acquirement, whose writings are spread to the remotest corner of the globe ; those sublime orators, who decided the decrees of senates at their pleasure ? Ask where are the proud, the rich, the voluptuous, the young ? where those haughty nobles, those hard masters, who so rigorously required such implicit obedience ? Ask the earth—she will show you the

places where they lie. Interrogate the tomb—it will tell you the narrow space in which their bodies are compressed—their bodies? do they then still exist?—Perhaps a handful of dust may remain of each.

But whilst all around us thus passes away, whilst every thing escapes us, the kingdom which shall not pass away draws nigh. So many revolutions, such a continual flux and reflux of human things, this perpetually changing scene of a fleeting world, all point to the end towards which we are hastening our steps. It is the voice of the Bridegroom, who calls us to the marriage-feast, and by his reiterated warnings, urges us to walk accordingly. You, who are deaf to this voice, who remain buried in the mire of earthly things, go down yet lower, and what will you find?—the grave, which is waiting for you, and into which you must descend, whether you will or not. Already Death stands at your side, ready to fall upon you, and drag you into it, as he has done with those who have preceded you.

*Meditations on Death.*

#### VIRTUE.

WHAT we ought to understand by the term virtue, is the complete assemblage of every virtuous qualification; for, as a royal diadem admits only, in the circle of ornaments that compose it, diamonds and the most precious stones, so the word virtue implies the union of all that is virtuous. Take away a single attribute, and you destroy the whole; it is no longer virtue that remains.

*Exhortation to a Spiritual Life.*

#### THE WORLD.

How is it, O perverse world! that man, always the dupe of thy treacherous charms, suffers himself continually to be deceived by them? Scarcely dost thou show thyself a



moment to our enchanted eyes, when thou disappearest from them, like the brief vision of a dream. O, thou impostor, how vile and contemptible are thy pretended glories! What is the reward to be expected from thy service?—the sad remembrance of crimes and follies! Thy meretricious delights dazzle and bewilder, and yet they pass away, fleeting as the flower which the same day sees bloom and droop.

Woe to the unfortunate who suffers himself to be entangled in the snares thou spreadest for him! When his dying hour draws nigh, is it to thee he may look for comfort? Answer, where are thy vaunted kings and emperors, those giants of grandeur and of strength, where are they?

Even philosophers themselves, so jealous of their liberty, have they, even, been able always to resist thy allurements?—no; they, too, have become thy slaves. Thou openest, under the feet of mortals, an immense gulf, in which they perish, without hope of escape.

Who ever yet has ranged himself beneath thy banners with impunity? hast thou ever yet granted a favour which has not been bought with long repentance? has any one ever yet escaped thy chains, without enjoying an indescribable satisfaction in the recovery of his liberty?

*On Penitence.*

# SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM,

*ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE.*

BORN, 347 ; DIED, 407.

THE name of Chrysostom, or *Golden-mouth*, by which this great man is better known than by his baptismal one of John, sufficiently declares the peculiar bent and happy description of his genius ; and, by a most felicitous combination, expresses at once the fulness of his eloquence, and the purity of his doctrine. He was born at Antioch in 347. He was yet in the cradle, when his father, a man of noble family, and who had acquitted himself with honour and courage in a military career, died ; but his mother, Anathasia, though in the bloom of youth and beauty, being only in her twentieth year when she assumed the garb of widowhood, devoted herself to his infancy and youth with a tenderness which prevented him from being sensible of his loss. Solely occupied with the care of her children, this cherished son, and a daughter a year older, she refused to listen to any offers of a second marriage, and led a life of such seclusion, that, when Libanius, the celebrated professor of rhetoric, heard the particulars of it from her son, who was placed, by her, with him, as his pupil, he exclaimed, as he turned towards his pagan

auditors, "O ye gods of Greece! what women these Christian women are!"

Chrysostom was at the same time instructed in philosophy by Andragathius, equally celebrated in his profession; but the genius of the young student peculiarly inclined him to oratory: in the long protracted struggle between the pagan and the Christian religion, the conversion of a man of talent, to either party, was always an achievement gratifying to him who might make it; hence Libanius, delighted from the first of his knowing him, with the extraordinary gifts of his pupil, spared no pains to seduce him into the worship of those gods, whose attributes and perfections he had most eloquently endeavoured to set forth, in his commentaries on the fables of Homer's poetry. But, however fervid the imagination of Chrysostom, he was, most happily for himself, guarded from the errors he might thus have been led into, by an early and habitual study of the Holy Scriptures, and the consequent expansion of his views, respecting the only beautiful, sublime, and true. Under the impressions they made upon him, he resigned, almost immediately after having entered on it, the profession of the bar, which he had made his choice; and in which he had, at his very commencement, obtained such a degree of success as drew forth the most flattering congratulations from his teacher Libanius,—who, never ceasing to regret the loss of a genius whom he had, as he expressed it, regarded as a present from the Muses, to defend

the cause of poetry and the gods, exclaimed, many years afterwards, as he lay on his death-bed, "Alas! I could have left my school to Chrysostom, if the Christians had not sacrilegiously carried him away from me!"

Meletius, the sweetness of whose disposition corresponding with his manners as with his name, was every way calculated to engage the affections of the young, and to fix their inclinations, was at that time Bishop of Antioch: hearing that Chrysostom had renounced the bar, being disgusted with the worldly-mindedness of the subtilities connected with it, he cultivated an intimacy with him, instructed him more fully in the truths of the Christian religion, habituated him to the practice of its virtues, and at the end of three years spent in this kind of noviciate, admitted him to baptism, and made him reader at his own Church.

Chrysostom was at this time only twenty-three years of age; shortly after, Meletius, to whom he had become tenderly attached, was banished from Antioch, for the third time, by the Emperor Valens, at the instigation of the Arians. Grieved at this separation from his spiritual guide, and longing for that solitude which, in great minds, adds to the strength and sublimity of their conceptions, all that it takes from their passions or their weaknesses, he resolved to withdraw himself from all society except that of Basil, afterwards Bishop of Antioch, his most intimate friend; and whom he has introduced as his

interlocutor, in his "Discourse on the Sacerdotal Office." With this friend, who had long wished for a solitary life, he intended to retire into the deserts of Syria; at that time the common retreat of men who afterwards suddenly emerged from them, in times of danger and calamity, to awe princes with the thunder of their remonstrances, and support the oppressed, the humble, and the afflicted, with their consolations, and the glorious hopes they held out to them.

When Anathasia was made acquainted with her son's resolution, she found all her religion insufficient, to enable her to support the thoughts of his lengthened and uncertain absence. Nothing can be more simply natural, yet more deeply touching, than his own account of the interview between them on this occasion.

"My mother," says he, "as soon as she suspected my design, took me by the hand, and asked me to go with her into her chamber; there, seating herself with me, on the side of the bed, where she had brought me into the world, she gave way to a torrent of tears, interrupted only by words which agitated me still more powerfully. 'My son,' said she, 'it was not long allowed me to enjoy the blessing of your father's virtues—the will of the Lord ordained it otherwise. His death followed close upon the sufferings I had endured in giving you birth: thus you were left an orphan in your cradle, and I became a widow in the very bloom of life. What I have had to struggle with, must be felt in order to be

imagined. No, it is not language that can describe the difficulties to which a young woman is exposed, who, scarcely having quitted her paternal roof, without any knowledge of the world, finds herself suddenly plunged into mourning and desolation, and obliged to take upon herself all the burden of a situation for which she is unfitted equally by her sex and youth. How rigorous and painful are the duties she is called upon to fulfil! What vigilance does it require to watch her servants, to repair their negligences, to guard against their dishonesty! What circumspection to avoid the snares which even her own family lay for her! what courage to defend herself against the injustice and brutality of assessors and tax-gatherers! If a father, in dying, leave only a daughter, however she may be, in some respects, an anxiety to a mother, she neither subjects her to so much expense nor so much solicitude: but if he leave a son, how great is a mother's responsibility! not a day passes but she trembles for him, setting aside all the expenses necessarily attendant on his education. Yet none of these considerations ever induced me to think of a second marriage—never could I have reconciled myself to the idea of introducing another husband into your father's house. I have braved the storm, and remained firm amidst all the oppositions I have met with; not even endeavouring to evade any of the restraints and duties my task imposed upon me. I have escaped the tempest, thanks, certainly, to the help of God; but next to

that, I have, without doubt, been supported through it by the consolation, so precious to the heart of a mother, in the midst of whatever afflictions may surround her, of seeing my son every day, and contemplating in him the living image and perfect resemblance of the husband I have lost. You gave me this consolation from your tenderest years, when you first began to utter the broken words so dear to a mother's ears. You cannot reproach me with any mismanagement or waste of your father's inheritance, as those too often may do, who have the misfortune to be left orphans—I have preserved it to you untouched, and I have even provided for all your expenses out of my own portion, and the money I have received from my family. Do not think, my dear son, that I mention these things to reproach you with them, as sacrifices; the only gratitude I ask of you is, not to make me a second time a widow, by opening a wound which time is beginning to heal. Do not leave me till you have closed my eyes: my last hour cannot be very long delayed. At your age you may hope to attain a period of life still far distant; but at mine, only one thought remains, and that is of death. As soon therefore as you have paid the last duties to me, as soon as you have laid my remains by those of your father, you will be free to go where you please—to risk the dangers of navigation, on whatever sea you may desire. No one will then have any right to oppose your wishes: but till that time, whilst one breath of life remains in me,

bear with my presence, and do not become weary of living under the same roof with me. Beware even, lest you may offend God himself, by a hasty resolution, inconsiderately taken, which urges you to abandon a mother who has never given you cause to complain of her, and to leave her, too, overwhelmed with affliction. If I had given you cause to accuse me of endeavouring to involve you in the troubles of the times, by encumbering you with the burden of my affairs, then I would consent to your disregarding the laws of nature; forgetting the care I have bestowed upon your education; breaking all the ties that attach you to your home; disengaging yourself from every duty—and, in short, that you, imagining you saw nothing but snares and ambushes around you, to destroy your peace, should fly from me as from your enemy. But if it be indeed true that I have spared nothing in my power to smooth the rugged path of life to you: if you acknowledge this, that consideration, alone, ought to have sufficient weight with you, to keep you near your mother. Whatever friends you may have, whatever may be their number or their affection, you will not find one among them, so anxious to contribute to your comfort as I am; because there cannot possibly be one among them, to whom your happiness and reputation are so dear as they are to me.”

Thus did this desolated widow's maternal tenderness struggle against her admiration of her son's piety—a contest between natural feeling and devo-



tional submission to which the early Christians were continually exposed. Her eloquent complaints, in the rich compounds of her native tongue, powerfully recall the lamentations of Andromache over her husband, the apostrophes of Penelope to her son. The language of real affliction is always the same—it always combines the pathos of poetry with the artlessness of truth, and never fails to excite the sympathy which is its sweetest solace !

The resolution of Chrysostom melted at the sight of his mother's tears, and he promised not to go to any great distance from her. Being, however, in danger of persecution from Valens, who, under pretence of instituting a search for books of magic, endeavoured to destroy all the works that were to be found among the orthodox Christians, he travelled to Jerusalem, and visited the solitaries on the shores of the Euphrates; this only increased his ardent longing for a life of seclusion, and the death of his mother, about this time, left him at liberty to indulge it without any mixture of self-reproach for having refused to listen to her tender entreaties. He was now, however, exposed to a new trial. He was informed of its being the intention of the Bishops of Syria, then assembled at Antioch, to nominate him and his friend Basil to the Episcopacy: shrinking from such a responsibility, for which a distrust of his youth, not having then attained the age prescribed for it by the Church, and a lowly estimate of his own unworthiness, made him think himself unfit, he

contrived, by a species of mental reservation which he has endeavoured to vindicate in his "Treatise on the Sacerdotal Office," to evade his own election, and procure that of his friend Basil. But, however ingenious the arguments which he has adduced, to prove that deception is allowable, when the object to be promoted by it is laudable, there can be no enlightened Christian who will not agree that "the saying one thing, and thinking another," as St. Augustine concisely defines falsehood, is in all cases reprehensible. The only palliation for the conduct of Chrysostom in this instance, which charity requires us to keep in view, is that his error sprung from an humble appreciation of himself—particularly respecting the management of his temper, which was by nature prone to anger; and not from any circumstance connected with his worldly interests.

No obstacle now presenting itself to his inclinations, Chrysostom went into the mountains of Syria, and placed himself under the direction of an aged hermit, with whom he passed four years. The fervour of his soul increasing as he estranged himself from the ways of men, he plunged himself, at the end of that time, into complete isolation, and lived two years entirely alone in a cavern; communing only with God, meditating incessantly on the Scriptures, which he is said to have had entirely by heart, and practising such severe austerities, especially with respect to depriving himself of sleep, that his health finally sank under them, and he was compelled in

consequence to return to Antioch. It was, however, during the time of this deep seclusion, these noiseless waking nights, that he composed, besides his "Discourse on the Sacerdotal Office," his "Defence of Monastic Life;" his "Consolations," addressed to Theodore; and his admirable "Treatises on the Compunction of the Heart," written at the request of two hermits, who sought his counsels.

Chrysostom had the pleasure of being welcomed back to Antioch by the venerable Meletius, who had been restored to his archbishopric, after an exile of eight years, and who soon after raised him to the rank of deacon, as a preparatory step to the Episcopacy: which, however, his humility would not permit him to receive, though he was now thirty-three years of age, till he had spent five years more, in preparing himself for it. It was in this interval that he composed his work "On Providence," for the particular consolation of a monk of virtuous principles, named Stagyrus, who was subject to violent attacks of frenzy, succeeded by fits of the darkest melancholy; under the influence of which the unhappy young man imagined himself entirely abandoned by God, and given up to perdition.

In 385 Chrysostom received, at the same time, from Flavian, ordination and the ministry of preaching. It was the wholesome custom of preachers of that period, to make the Scriptures the entire subject of their discourses, sometimes taking a whole book, sometimes a detached incident, to explain and comment upon,

and summing up their remarks with the moral instruction to be drawn from the subject they had chosen to elucidate. Chrysostom preached in this manner three times a week, and sometimes seven days successively, chiefly from the New Testament. It was then that the people of Antioch, that learned and voluptuous city, which might be termed the Athens of the East, were to be seen gathering together to listen to Chrysostom's discourses, like bees swarming over a field enamelled with flowers. Not merely Christians, but also Jews and Pagans, were drawn together by his eloquence, like one large family; and a hundred thousand persons, all that Antioch could contain of inhabitants, were to be counted, at different times, as his auditors. He owed nothing of his success to any external appearance, for he was small in stature, and his pallid complexion, and meagre features, plainly told of the austerities by which he had subjugated, in early youth, a temperament naturally ardent and imaginative: but the fire of his genius sparkled in his eyes, and the sensibility of his heart communicating itself to the tones of his voice, penetrated his auditors with responsive feelings, and added to the effect which the fervour of his piety, the grandeur of his conceptions, and the extent of his erudition, produced on all who heard them. He was frequently interrupted by plaudits, according to the erroneous and improper custom of the time, more suitable to a pagan forum than a Christian Church,—but he

continually told those who did so, that he should be more assured of the merits of his discourses by the alteration of their hearts, than by the clapping of their hands; and he repeatedly made it a subject of complaint and grief that he should see so many come to hear him preach, and so few to join in the prayers. Nevertheless he had the satisfaction to find a gradual reformation of manners attend upon his labours, as well in Thrace, Asia, and Pontus, as in the city of Antioch, greatly owing to his zeal in deposing the corrupt and profligate bishops in those places, and electing persons duly qualified for the ministry, in their room.

Two years after Chrysostom's assumption of the sacred functions, a grievous sedition broke out in Antioch, by which the inhabitants exposed themselves to the utmost fury of the resentment of Theodosius, a prince who, though excellent in his general character, was too easily carried away by the impetuosity of his feelings.

The people, discontented with an increase of taxes, already both grievously oppressive in themselves, and rendered still more so by the tyrannical manner in which they were levied, abandoned themselves to their rage, threw down and treated with the utmost indignity the statues of the Emperor Theodosius and of his father, and even that of his consort, the Empress Flacilla, a woman of most exemplary virtue and humility, whose death had, only a short time before, plunged the whole city into grief

and mourning, She had been the invariable benefactress of the people, and above all of the poor, to whose necessities and wants she had continually ministered with her own hands—yet it was these very people who now dragged her mutilated effigies through the streets. Theodosius, still more irritated at their ingratitude towards her memory, than their rebellion against himself, gave orders that the city should be destroyed, and that not even a child should be left in it alive! such are the dreadful resentments of unlimited power.

The inhabitants, passing almost in a moment from blind fury to a gloomy calm, saw the horrors of their situation: many fled to the forests and mountains; others shut themselves up in their houses, waiting their fate in stupid despair. Even the philosophers, who could so ably despise fear and contemn emotions, at a distance, all fled, with the exception of Libanius, when they saw themselves placed in the midst of dangers; and a mournful silence reigned throughout the city, interrupted only by hymns and litanies, composed at the instant, to implore the Almighty to move the heart of the emperor to compassion; and many who had never entered the church before, now joined fervently in divine worship, whilst the theatres, and all other public places, were entirely deserted.

The monks and the hermits left their retreats in the mountains, and descended to the gates of the palace, to offer up their petition to the emperor for the people. The venerable Bishop Flavian, not-

withstanding his advanced years, went himself to the emperor, at Constantinople, to intercede for them: and, during his absence, Chrysostom supported the courage and animated the piety of the remnant of his flock, by the fine homilies, twenty-two in number, entitled, on account of the occasion on which they were delivered, the “Homilies of the Statues.”

It would lead us too far, to detail the rigours with which the city was visited under the first impulses of imperial wrath; the ameliorations which Flavian, with the eloquent remonstrances of Chrysostom in his mouth, procured for it; the gradual return of the emperor's natural humanity, and respect for religion, whilst listening to the arguments for mercy and compassion drawn from the source of the gospel, is best shown in his own words: “Shall we, who are only man, show ourselves implacable towards men, when the great Master of mankind prayed upon the cross for his murderers?” Such was the blessed influence of the practical precepts of Christianity in ages when depravity and despotism reigned around.

Gladly would Chrysostom have consecrated the labours of his life to a people among whom he saw them beginning to bring forth the fruits he so ardently desired; but the order of Divine Providence decreed otherwise. The patriarchal seat of Constantinople became vacant, after the death of the Emperor Theodosius in 397, under the reign of his two sons Honorius and Arcadius, who divided the empire between them. The choice of Arcadius, or rather of his favourite and minister Eutropius, the eunuch,

fell upon Chrysostom. His nomination of so distinguished a character was the only act of this minion of royalty, originally a slave, but exalted even to the honours of the consulate, without a single virtue to set in opposition to his avarice and ambition, during the period of his power, which was satisfactory to the people. Theophilus, the patriarch of Alexandria, was, however, disappointed by it, in a plan he had formed for electing an obscure person subservient to his interests, and from that time he became the bitterest enemy of Chrysostom.

So dear was their bishop to the inhabitants of Antioch, and so attached was he to them, that there was every reason to believe it would not be possible to take him openly away, without risk of exciting some violent commotion in the city; it was deemed necessary, therefore, to have recourse to stratagem; a favourite mode of operation with the Greeks, from time immemorial, as Homer sufficiently testifies. The general of the East, accordingly, sent to desire Chrysostom to come to confer with him at a spot particularized, near the Roman gate. Chrysostom went, was taken by the general into his chariot, and rapidly transported to a place previously fixed upon, where he was delivered into the care of officers, sent there by Arcadius, for the purpose of receiving him, by whom he was conveyed to Constantinople. Thus did he see himself entrapped into a dignity he was no way desirous of, by much the same kind of artifice he had practised towards his friend Basil, twenty



years before. Had he been asked, at this juncture, his opinion of such pious frauds, he would perhaps have given a very different one from what he had done when he was making use of them. A council of bishops assembled in the city to celebrate his ordination, but the outward honours they paid him ill concealed their inward jealousies; the dignity which had been forced upon him, against his will, had been secretly sought, with all the meanness of intrigue and bribery, by many who were now congratulating him upon his accession to it; and the mortification of their failure was increased, by seeing themselves superseded by a man of talents and virtues so far superior to their own, who, moreover, had already turned the full bent of his genius to the reformation of Church-discipline and the manners of the Christian community.

Chrysostom found at Constantinople all the vices of Asia, augmented by the presence of an effeminate court. Arcadius had inherited from Theodosius his love of pomp, without any of the virtues with which it was in him accompanied; and the sermons of Chrysostom at this time exhibit, in reprehending it, most curious pictures of the oriental luxury which he saw every where around him. If at Antioch he had inveighed, with all the force of his eloquence, against the expensive feasts, the costly garments, even to the shoes embroidered with gold, the splendid furniture, the walls inlaid with ivory and marble, the mosaic pavements, the painted windows, the beds

of solid silver, which many of the Christians permitted themselves, how much more cause did he find for his censures at Constantinople, where the most luxurious effeminacies that the rich could indulge in, were yet not to be compared with those of which their monarch set them an example !

Arcadius never appeared in public without a body of guards, magnificently habited, and bearing gilded bucklers and lances. Seated in the midst of them, in a chariot drawn by white mules, and covered with gold, he exhibited his earrings, his bracelets, his diadem, all of precious stones ; his robe stiff with them, even his feet shining like the *outside* of his head. Whilst an infatuated degraded crowd pressed around him to gaze upon his finery, the nobles waited on his staircases, and in his halls and courts, which were all sprinkled with gold dust, to pay court to some of his favourite eunuchs. What a field for a genius like that of Chrysostom ! He began by giving, in his own person and establishment, the example of every thing that he wished his people to follow. He sold all the rich furniture of his predecessor Nectarius, and gave the product of it to such of the poor as were in the most immediate want ; and it is scarcely necessary to say that the wretchedness of the populace is ever in proportion to the luxury and extravagance of the government. His table was reduced to the simplest scale, though he had another served with neatness and reasonable liberality, in a house next to his own,

for strangers who might visit him; but he himself generally dined alone, on account of the exceeding weakness of stomach brought on by the too great austerities he had practised in his youth.

He founded, out of the funds of the Church, which had before been consumed in pomp, several hospitals; one near the church, for the poor of the place, others for strangers, in more distant parts of the city. He attacked all the vices of the age, both in public and private, and spared not those of the priests, any more than of the people; he declaimed with the full force of his eloquence against the general corruption of manners, the abuse of opulence, the passion for spectacles, and every thing, in short, which called for reprehension. He sent messengers of the Gospel into the remotest and most opposite countries, and Scythia felt equally with Palestine and Persia the effects of his pastoral solicitude.

In the mean time, however, other scenes were going on in this mighty empire, which soon threw it into one scene of tumult and disorder. Alaric was ravaging Greece, and Gainas, general of the Goths, attached to the service of the emperor, dictated laws to the trembling Arcadius, and forced him to sign an order for the exile of his favourite Eutropius. In a moment the courage of the unfortunate minister sank with his fortunes; he fled, pursued by the people, thirsting for his blood, to the church of Saint Sophia, and sought an asylum at the foot of the

pontifical chair. It was on this occasion that Chrysostom poured forth that torrent of eloquence, entitled in his works, "On the disgrace of Eutropius," in behalf of the fallen favourite, which, unpremeditated as it was, has ever been regarded as one of the most powerful productions of his genius. He placed himself in front of the unhappy fugitive, waved his hand to speak, and the profoundest silence was instantly established. He began to discourse on the vanity of human things, the uncertainty of worldly greatness, the vicissitudes to which human fortunes are subject; gradually his audience melted into tears, their minds became calm, and Eutropius escaped; but his respite was not of long duration, for shortly after, endeavouring to quit Constantinople secretly, he was seized, and carried to the isle of Cyprus, whence he was afterwards transferred, by order of Gainas, to Chalcedonia, and there beheaded.

It was in these days that every thing which was heroic, noble, and inspiriting, was to be found in the sphere of the Church, and the talents of its ministers, and every thing that was degrading and unjust, within the precincts of the court. The death of Eutropius, so far from appeasing the violence of Gainas, seemed only to awaken in him a more ardent thirst of blood. He now demanded, on some trivial pretext, the heads of three of the principal nobles in the empire, of whose influence he was jealous; and such was the abjectness into which the state was fallen, that

they were actually delivered up to him ; but Chrysostom accompanied them, and succeeded, by his eloquence, in obtaining their pardon from the barbarian chief.

Scarcely was Chrysostom returned to his residence, when he was obliged to leave it again, to reconcile the differences which then subsisted between the churches of Asia. During his absence a league was entered into against him, by those who felt his virtues a satire upon their own vices ; and who bore a mortal resentment against him, for the freedom of his censures, which, they were conscious, applied to themselves. Theophilus, supported by the Empress Eudoxia, headed this train of envious priests, discontented courtiers, and haughty matrons. Chrysostom, on his return, learned the machinations of his enemies, but disdained to notice them. He was summoned to appear before a council : he refused to comply. A charge, of twenty-nine accusations, was made out against him, among which was one of having caused some of the silver vases belonging to the church, to be sold, and the money to be given to the poor. He declined replying to any of them, and was sentenced to exile for contempt of the Emperor's authority.

So greatly was the attachment of the people to Chrysostom, feared by his persecutors, that, to prevent any revolt at the sight of his departure, he was taken from his residence in the night, to be put on board the vessel that was to take him away ; but

not all their precautions could prevent the intelligence from spreading through the city, and carrying grief and consternation along with it. The people ran down to the beach, some with loud cries demanding his restoration to them, and declaring, in all the hyperbole of Greek enthusiasm, that the sun should sooner be torn from the firmament, than Chrysostom from his church; others, with tears, entreating his parting benediction. The lamenting crowd was like a long funeral train, or some dismal ceremony of expiatory penance. In proportion as the people were conscious of their degradation as a people, they had attached themselves to this great man, as the defender of their natural rights: his austere and simple modes of life made him appear sacred in their eyes; and in the sincerity of his language, which applied its censures with still more rigour to the rich than to the poor, they found a security for the firmness of his character, alike inaccessible to flattery or to fear.

Two or three days after the departure of Chrysostom from Constantinople, the shock of an earthquake was plainly felt throughout the city. The people, not yet recovered from their grief at his loss, loudly proclaimed that it was a sign of the displeasure of heaven against them, for having suffered him to be taken from them. The clamours increased.—Arcadius shook with fear; the Empress, more courageous and quick-sighted, saying to him, “We shall no longer retain the empire, if we do not recall

John," wrote the same night to Chrysostom, inviting him, in the most courteous terms, to return; and throwing all the blame of his departure upon the enemies whose machinations she now affected to see through, and deplore. The Bosphorus was covered with vessels to welcome him back again. As soon as he landed, he requested to be allowed to remain in the outskirts of the city, and not resume the Episcopal office, until he should have been acquitted of the charges brought against him, by a more numerous council than that which had condemned him; but the feelings of the people were not to be controlled. Thousands ranged themselves around him with lighted tapers, and, with unpremeditated bursts of sacred harmony, led him to his church, and insisted on his mounting the tribune, to instruct them again with his divine eloquence, which always seemed to have new attractions for them.

Reconciliations of circumstance are, however, always of short duration; the Empress could no more forget her real hatred of Chrysostom, than her forced condescension towards him. The courtiers, to divert her mortification, or rather to ingratiate themselves in her favour, by assigning that as their motive, organized a festival on the dedication of a silver statue, erected to her honour, in the public place between the Senate and the Church of Saint Sophia. The ceremonies and dances on this occasion were sufficiently Pagan in their character, to have shocked the religious feelings of a far less zealous

Christian than Chrysostom: he attacked them, with his wonted power, as profane, indecent, and idolatrous. His discourse was represented to the Empress as an insult to her person: she was willing to consider it so, because it afforded her an excuse to herself for renewing her injuries towards him; and it must be confessed that the zeal of Chrysostom, on this occasion, carried him, at any rate, beyond the bounds of worldly prudence, if not of Christian humility, in permitting himself to begin his discourse with, “ Now, again Herodias raves and is vexed; again she dances, again she desires the head of John in a charger.”

The decision of the council which had condemned Chrysostom not having been formally annulled, his re-assumption of his pastoral duties might, according to a decree of the Council of Antioch, with respect to such cases, be considered as irregular. In the hope of rendering him liable a second time, to censures on this account, the bishops of Greece and of the East convened themselves again at Constantinople, to debate upon the measures to be pursued respecting him. It was just before Easter, and his adversaries were extremely desirous to get him sent away, before the celebration of that sacred season. The Emperor was weak enough to yield to their cabals, and the evening before the festival Chrysostom received an order to resign his office. The people, hearing this, immediately left the churches, and assembled together to offer up their devotions,



with their bishop, at the public baths, built by Constantine.

Three thousand catechumens who had received baptism the day before, still in the white garments they had worn on the occasion, covered the adjoining fields. The court, as cruel as it was cowardly, sent a troop of Thracian guards to disperse them, which they did with the utmost ferocity; striking even the aged priests across the head, till the pavement was covered with blood, and outraging the women and children in the most brutal manner. These persecutions were continued from Easter until Pentecost, during which time Chrysostom's life was repeatedly attempted, but was preserved by the citizens, who relieved each other in companies, night and day, in the guarding of his house. At length the sentence of his exile was pronounced. "I am not afraid of banishment," said he, on hearing his sentence; "the earth is the Lord's, and I shall find him whithersoever I may go." But though full of fortitude on his own account, the desolation of his people, and the circumstances under which he left them, made a profound impression on his heart. In order to guard against the commotions which, from the exceedingly agitated state of the city, it was possible his removal might excite, he ordered a horse to be held, as if in waiting for him, at the great door of the church on the western side, and whilst the multitude were waiting there, in the hope of seeing him, he privately quitted it by the eastern side, and

immediately embarked for Bithynia. He arrived at Nicia, the capital of that province, on the 20th of June, 404. But he was not long suffered to remain there in tranquillity: the malice of the Empress still pursued him, and, at her instigation, an order came from the court for him to be removed to Cocusus, a small town on the frontier of Lower Armenia, in the deserts of Mount Taurus, a barren cold region grievously infested with robbers, and already marked with the murder of Paul, the former bishop of Constantinople. The fatigues of a march of seventy days were increased by the brutality of his guards, who not only urged him to a continuity of exertion beyond his strength, but repeatedly deprived him of the sleep necessary to repair his wasted powers. At length he arrived at the end of his journey, and was received both by the bishop and the inhabitants with every mark of respect and kindness: nevertheless, he had to struggle with perpetual sufferings, not only from the inclemency of the climate, but also from the incursions of the neighbouring Isaurians, who, pouring down from the mountains, perpetually ravaged the province, and left every where the traces of their horrible devastations. He was obliged to seek refuge from them in the fortress of Arabissa, on Mount Taurus, and of his situation there he has drawn a striking picture, in one of his letters to his friends.

“The least inconvenience,” says he, “that results to us, from the audacious attacks of these barbarians

is that they keep us perpetually shut up, as in a dismal prison. We see death constantly at our gates—all around us fall a prey either to fire or to sword, and we have every reason to dread a famine, on account of the multitude who continually crowd for a refuge into our narrow limits; for terror chases every one from the large towns. The cities are only a sorrowful mass of silent empty houses—caves and forests are become the habitations of the citizens; and the Armenians, reduced to the condition of wild beasts, can only find safety in the recesses of the deserts. The people here change their abodes after the fashion of the Scythians and the Nomades, but the little children, less hardy than theirs, carried off precipitately in the night, are often left lifeless, and stiff with cold, in the middle of the snow.”

The famine that Chrysostom predicted, did indeed arrive, to put the finishing stroke to the miseries he describes; and which called forth in him all the tender charities of his nature; though destitute himself of every thing, he was yet enabled to minister to the necessities of the poor, by his eloquent appeals to the benevolence of the rich, whilst he supported them under their afflictions by his prayers and exhortations. He also received occasional supplies, when opportunity occurred, from the friends he had left, and more especially from Olympia, the widow of Rufinus the Prefect, an excellent woman, who had served as deaconess in the Church, and was, for her adherence to Chrysostom, banished to Nicome-

dia, where she lived many years, devoting her opulence to works of piety. He likewise sent missionaries among the Goths, and into Persia and Phoenicia; and kept up an intercourse with his friends at Constantinople, by means of letters, which admirably depict the warmth of his natural affections, and his perfect submission to the decrees of the Divine Master, whom, in all his dispensations, he served with the same unwearied zeal and holy joy. Thus he writes from the place of his exile to some priests at Antioch, with whom he had been bound in ties of tender intimacy.

“ You show me that you are indeed my most intimate and perfect friends by writing to me—by anticipating my wishes in your letters, by pressing me to write to you, and desiring me not to confine myself to the limits usually prescribed to epistolary communications. Such marks of attachment make the desert that I am inhabiting appear a desert no longer; they console me under my divers and continual afflictions. What is there in the world that can equal Christian charity? assuredly nothing;—it is the root, the source, the mother of every good. It is a virtue which is insensible to fatigue—a virtue which imparts, to those who practise it sincerely, the sweetest and most lively pleasures. I cannot thank you too much, for having preserved such real affection for me. In the same manner, wherever I might be, banished even to the extremities of the earth, to a desert still more frightful than that in

which I now am, I should bear you in my mind—I should retain you in my memory—I should preserve you at the bottom of my heart; so that neither the distance between us, the length of time we might be separated, or the multitude of my afflictions, should have any power to chill my regard for you. Yes, at this moment, as if I had been with you only a few days since, or rather as if I were still with you, as in reality I am, I see you, I regard you with looks of affection. Such, doubtless, such is true friendship. It is neither impeded by distance, weakened by time, nor depressed by a weight of misfortunes; but, continually elevating itself higher and higher, it resembles fire, in activity as well as in heat. None know this better than you—none know better than you what it is to love. I regard you in this respect as inexpressibly happy; for though I am weak and miserable, and can make you no return, the Lord is all-sufficient to recompense you, even beyond your charity itself; and his gifts always, in their magnificence, far exceed all that we do or say to merit them.

“ I most ardently desire to see you with my own eyes; to enjoy your presence and your conversation, and to drink in the delights of your friendship, at long draughts; but as this is impossible, not because of any indolence or neglect on my side, but that the bonds of my exile withhold me, do not deprive me of the only means which remain to us of conversing together, but send me a great number of letters, to

inform me of the health of all of you. The more I shall receive of them, the more consolation I shall be sensible of, in the foreign land I am now inhabiting. Convinced, therefore, my respected friends, as you must be of the pleasure you will give me, of the joy you will impart to me, do not grudge me this happiness. Whilst I am reading your letters, I shall believe you are with me : and I shall trace in them, with still more fidelity, the idea of your presence."

The unabated esteem in which Chrysostom was held by his friends, the even increasing extent of his reputation during his banishment, and the obstacles which the influence of his name, and the unabated affection of his followers, who were stigmatised by the appellation of Johannites, presented to the intrigues of his enemies at Constantinople, all made them anxious to remove him still further from the means of communication with civilized haunts; and indeed to rid themselves entirely of him, by any means that would not openly subject them to the imputation of murder. It was easy for them to obtain an order from the court for a change in the place of his abode, and accordingly they solicited one for his removal to Pityus, a desert place upon the northern shores of the Black Sea. This second journey lasted three months, though it was made at such long daily stages as completely exhausted the strength of the venerable bishop. He was conducted by two prætorian soldiers, one of

whom would have shown compassion to his increasing weakness, but was prevented by the brutality of his companion, who took an infernal pleasure in making the sufferer proceed by night as well as day ; exposing his venerable uncovered head to be drenched in rain, and scorched in the sun. Happily for himself, his release was nearer than his tormentors had expected. On the 14th of September, 407, in the 53d year of his age, after a night of increased indisposition at Comanus, a little bourg in Pontus, he requested a short time to recover himself before he proceeded on his way. He was refused, and set off, but scarcely had he got out of the place when he was taken so ill that he was obliged to return to it ; and taking shelter in the church dedicated to Basiliscus, who had suffered martyrdom under the persecution of Dioclesian, he made the pious preparations for his eternal journey which this his last and consecrated resting-place afforded, and tranquilly expired, with his favourite words on his lips—" Glory be to God in all things."

Chrysostom has been styled the Homer of eloquence. The firmness of the persecuted Christian explains the genius of the orator. His studies in the school of Libanius—his filial piety towards his mother—his flight to the deserts—his gentle yet firm authority over a people refined and volatile as those of Antioch—his combats with the intrigues of Constantinople—his unbroken courage during his long

exile, may all be said to express the various characteristics of his eloquence—by turns ingenious, tender, elegant, austere, and sublime.

The eloquence of the East seemed to have buried itself at once, in the same tomb with John Chrysostom, and from his time to our own, Greece has not produced a single name, deserving of record, as a Christian preacher.

The works of St. Chrysostom have appeared in many elaborate editions; the best, perhaps, is that of Savile, Eton, 1612, in eight folio volumes. They have been also repeatedly translated into Latin, and the chief portion of them at different times into the modern languages. His treatises against the Gentiles, his Discourse on Compunction, his Homilies of the Statues, on St. Matthew, and on the Epistles of St. Paul, are among the finest of his productions. The learned Erasmus gave up his favourite classic authors for the study of this profound master of the human heart, from whom the greatest divines, both ancient and modern, have continually drawn their most striking imagery, and their most forcible expressions.

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## SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS

### SAINT CHRYSOSTOM.

#### ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

THE book of the Evangelists is the history of the Life and Doctrine of Jesus Christ. The book of Acts is the record of what has been said and done by the Holy Spirit. In both one and the other it is the same virtue which operates. In the first, Jesus Christ acts in person—in the second, the Holy Spirit works by his apostles.

*Homily 5th.*

#### ALL THINGS CONDUCTIVE TO THE GLORY OF GOD.

GOD, in his wisdom, causes all things to operate to his glory. There is not any thing, even to sin itself, however injurious in its nature to his Sovereign Majesty, which is not useful, in the views of his providence, and conducive to the glory of the Lord\*.

• *Homily on the Sedition of Antioch.*

\* We need no further illustration of the truth of this sublime remark of St. Chrysostom's, than the consideration, that if it had not been for the sins of mankind, we should never have known the ineffable redeeming love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in taking our nature upon himself; nor should we ever have known the happiness of that eternal gratitude, which his adorable goodness in so doing, must give birth to in our souls.

## AMBITION.

WHAT is the ruin of most men, is their unwillingness to make themselves acquainted with the extent and limit of their ability ; instead of which they incessantly aspire to be something more than what they are and ought to be. With their hearts full of worldly affections, it is in vain that they gain riches and consequence—they require still more—they think only of mounting higher and higher, until suddenly their foot slips, and they find themselves at the bottom of the abyss beneath. This we daily see, we are witnesses of their misfortune, but the sight of it does not make us more prudent for ourselves.

*. Homily on Genesis.*

## AVARICE.

IT is to the love of gold that the Scriptures ascribe the origin of all evils. It is the lamentable source of animosities, quarrels, debates, revenge, threats, and injustice, both in word and deed ; and hence also robberies, murders, and sacrileges. It is this passion which has inundated with blood not only cities, and the habitations of men, but mountains, deserts, the most insulated retreats. Not even the storms of the ocean can arrest the temerity of its enterprises ; witness the pirates and brigands who infest the seas, and brave the dangers of them for a handful of gold. It is through the passion for this metal that we see the laws of nature overturned, institutions that appeared the most solidly established trodden under foot, and impiety outraging the dead as well as the living, and pushing its crimes even to the violation of the grave, without pity for the ashes of those that sleep therein. We may avoid the ambush of the highway robber, if we relinquish travelling ; but how can we avoid the snares which avarice and cupidity lay for

us even in our houses, and that not in the dark, but in open day? There is something horrible, no doubt, in lying in wait for a man to kill him; but is it in reality a less crime to let a poor man die of hunger?—to load a debtor with irons, and to chain both the one and the other to the slow and cruel torture of famine? You are not personally their executioner, but you permit another to be so. The assassin who immolates his victim at a single stroke, at any rate abridges his sufferings; but you, who conceal your barbarity under a hypocritical mask, you, when you deprive this unfortunate of the light of day, and cause him incessantly to wish that he was no more; if you do not put a poignard to his throat, it is only that you may make him die a thousand deaths, instead of one. And what renders it still more criminal in you, is that, in exercising such barbarous rigour, you have not necessity to plead, as compelling you to it, no emergency which presses upon you. It is only that you may have a yet more splendid equipage; a greater number of pillars to your house, a still more commodious habitation for your horses or your dogs. And your brother, whom God calls to a participation in the same blessings with yourself, you overwhelm him with affliction! For whom then are the flames of hell, if not for those who are guilty of such inhumanity? You see beneath your eyes a man, an image of God like yourself, in indigence, prostrating himself at your feet, in the humiliation of his misery, whilst your wife is dragged along by mules covered with gold; whilst you load your ceilings with it, your furniture, your most trifling articles, in a profusion that would keep twenty families. On your table, on your clothes, about your bed, even on things destined to the vilest uses, gold is every where to be seen; whilst the members of Jesus Christ, the poor, for whom he descended on the earth, and shed his blood, they have not a garment, nor a morsel of bread, nor a miserable

roof, under which to shelter themselves from the inclemency of the seasons! And God sees it!

*Homily xi.*

CHARITY TOWARDS THE POOR.

IT is not without reason, that I insist as I do on the performance of this duty. I know that many are in the habit, before they will acquit themselves of it, of satisfying their curiosity with respect to those who come to them to crave assistance; they must know all about their country, their way of life, their morals, their business, whether they are strong or weak: they might be excused if they confined themselves to these general inquiries—but they go further,—they accuse, they condemn without hearing; and it is this which obliges these poor creatures to employ all the artifices imaginable to endeavour to get the better of this hard-heartedness respecting them. Were it only in the season for labour that we permitted ourselves to act in this manner, it might perhaps be endured; but at the present time, when they have to struggle with every privation, without any means of procuring work, to appear to them only in the light of severe un pitying judges, is a rigour without excuse, and the excess of inhumanity. We reproach the poor with doing nothing; merciless on this point with respect to them, we are indulgent towards ourselves on things far more criminal than all their idleness.

The poor man who solicits your charity, has left his lonely roof, as soon as the shades of night gave him a hope that he might not be known, to beg from door to door, for the means of supporting his miserable existence. Trembling and fearful he dares scarcely trust himself to the obscurity around. He relinquishes sleep—how indeed can he hope to taste the comfort of it, when the hunger which preys upon him chases it from his eyes! No matter

whether the rain wets him through, or the cold freezes him, he must still wander on, and watch and beg; whilst you, just stepping out of your bath, luxuriously attired, without uneasiness for the morrow, without thinking any more of the day, that has imperceptibly come to its close, your imagination nursing the most agreeable dreams,—you are going to sit down to a table where opulence and refinement dispute the palm of taste. Let the poor man come up to you at this moment; let him extend his suppliant hands towards you; see his humble posture, almost bowed to the earth, pinched with cold and hunger alike—he craves a morsel of bread: do you give it him? No; all he will take away with him from your door will be a humiliating refusal, pronounced in the most insulting manner. No; he is reduced to return as he set out, with empty hands; vainly imploring the compassion of those whom he may meet in the streets, and arriving once more, through the mud and in darkness, at the dismal dwelling whence he set out, and where he finds neither fire to warm him, nor food to keep him from fainting with inanition. It is to you, my brethren, that I recommend this unfortunate. When you return to your own homes, where the streaming light of your flambeaux supplies the absence of the day, where sumptuous tables and voluptuous beds are waiting for you, think of this poor man, left to a neglect you would not suffer your domestic animals to endure, with nothing to lie upon but a little straw, devoured with hunger, congealed with cold. You, if a few drops of water chance to pierce your walls, cry out as if it were a deluge, and set all your servants in motion to dry it up again; whilst this poor creature, stretched on his truckle bed, has nothing to defend him from all the inclemencies which overwhelm him at once. Could you see his misery without being moved? Would you have the heart of a tiger?

Nor is it enough to be liberal—you must be merciful also. Mercy is more acceptable to God than all sacrifices. It is the virtue that he loves the best. Of all the qualities of man, it is that which most surely wins him the suffrages of his fellow-creatures. How indeed can we do without it for ourselves! Have we not need of all the mercy of our God? Let us then begin by showing it to others: but what do I say? begin!—can we ever do a deed of mercy, in which we have not already been anticipated by the example of our Lord? Let us then at least have the merit of following it; let us imitate the prophet—he says, “I am like a green olive tree in the house of God.” Let this be our model. Let the sweet unction of mercy diffuse itself around us. There are charitable Christians, who nevertheless are so drily and rigidly—barren fig-trees, whereon there are leaves and no fruit. There are also those whose souls are narrow, who are charitable by fits; who will give once or twice, and no more; but let us resemble the olive—let us bring forth fruits, and abundant fruits; the fruits of peace and mercy.

*Homilies XI. 33.*

#### CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

“How is it possible,” you say, “to love so many persons at the same time?” Look at the primitive disciples: they were many thousands in number, and yet they formed altogether only one heart and one soul. In the present day a man scarcely loves his own brother; how would it be possible, then, for his heart to open to so vast a multitude? Oh, if there existed a city in which all the inhabitants should really love each other in this manner! What a touching spectacle it would offer to our eyes! What a sweet union of affection and will! What is it that produces the harmony that enchants us in music? is it not the truth of the

chords? An immense orchestra, composed of so many voices and instruments, all obey one simultaneous impulse. What silence reigns around ! no agitation, no confusion—it seems as if one person only was there. Such is the exact image of a city in which Christian charity should reign throughout.

*Homily x.*

#### THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

GOD in his Scriptures compares his Church to a vine, which he has planted himself, and which he cultivates with his own hands. He is the celestial husbandman, of whom he speaks to us in his Gospel. He has begun by removing from the vicinity of the vine, which he has transplanted from Egypt to the promised land, all the nations of the unfaithful, communication with whom might be injurious to the development of its roots and foliage. He has surrounded it with a hedge of protecting angels, commissioned to defend it against the attacks of robbers ; in the middle of it he has constructed a wine-press, true image of the tribulations it would experience in the course of time, containing in it a mixture of good and bad ; and he has built a tower in his vineyard, to indicate that those who fly to him for refuge, will find an asylum impenetrable to the arrows of the adversary.

The most furious persecutions are let loose against the Church, without its foundations being shaken. Enemies have started up from its own bosom, and declared no less formidable war against it, without being able to scale the walls of this fortress, protected by the promise, "*the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*" This promise proceeded from the mouth of God himself. Is it surprising that the same Word which created the heavens, established the earth upon the waters, and gave to the mass of the

universe the liquid and indomitable element for its support, should maintain his Church, far more precious in his sight than the earth, the heavens, and the elements?

*Commentary on St. Matthew.*

#### DAILY TRANSGRESSIONS.

WE are very ready to reckon up our trials and afflictions, but are we equally so to keep account of the sins which draw them down upon us? Mention only those you commit in one day, without speaking of your past life, which I wish not to know; do not go beyond those you have been guilty of this very day; confine yourself even to such as may present themselves to your memory. Who is there among us that may not have to reproach himself with coldness in his devotions, with the secret suggestions of pride, with false pretensions, with an inflated opinion of himself, and contempt or slander of his neighbour? Who is there who has admitted no guilty thought into his breast, or permitted his eyes to rest on no improper object? who has not felt anger, and a desire of revenge, when the recollection of his enemy has entered his mind? who has not felt mortified at seeing the success of some one by whom he may have been injured, or satisfaction when it happens that misfortunes overtake him?

*Twentieth Homily on St. Matthew.*

#### DETRACTION.

EVEN had we no other sin than this to reproach ourselves with, it would be enough to condemn us to destruction. We rigorously examine the faults of another, and we do not perceive the enormous sins we ourselves commit. We pass our lives in searching out and condemning the faults of our neighbours. It would be difficult to find a man of the world,—nay, even an ecclesiastic or a monk,—who is



exempt from this vice, notwithstanding the terrible maledictions against it which the Gospel sets forth:—" *With what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.*" The severity of the punishments denounced against evil-speaking, does not prevent any of us from abandoning ourselves to this sin. Thus it is that we all find out the melancholy art of arriving at the gates of eternal death by the same road.

*Homily on Compunction, b. 1.*

#### DIVINE TRUTH.

AN immoral life is a great obstacle to the knowledge of Divine Truth; for as a person who is in error respecting subjects of religion, but who is leading a good life, does not persist in it, so it is very difficult for him who is living in opposition to the moral precepts of the Gospel, to bow himself under the yoke of its divine mysteries. In order to embrace the Truth, the dominion of the passions must be renounced.

*Homily on the Epistle to the Corinthians.*

#### EARLY CHRISTIANITY.

WHAT contributed the most powerfully to the propagation of the Christian Church, was not so much the miracles that the first Christians performed, as the holy lives they led. They were angels upon earth. If we lived as they did, we should not be asked, as we continually are, for miracles in proof of our doctrines; we should bring the whole world into the faith of Jesus Christ, by the force of our example alone.

*Homily on the Epistle to the Corinthians.*

## EARLY CHRISTIANS IN EGYPT.

TRANSPORT yourselves in imagination into Egypt; you will see there a new paradise, more brilliant than the richest gardens; innumerable troops of angels in human form; entire nations of martyrs and virgins; the tyranny of Satan overturned, and the kingdom of Jesus Christ every where flourishing. You will see that country, the ancient cradle of the arts, sciences, and philosophy, formerly so proud of the superstitions it disseminated through the world, now proud only of being the faithful disciple of a few fishermen; renouncing all the false wisdom of the philosophers to acknowledge no other than that preached by a publican or a tent-maker, and resting all its glory on the cross of Christ Jesus, here displayed in triumph to all eyes. It is not only in cities that we are called upon to admire so astonishing a revolution; if we go to the deserts, still more wonderful spectacles will be offered to our eyes. This vast country is no longer any thing but an immense camp, where soldiers exercise themselves under the banner of Jesus Christ, in all the Christian virtues, and where they lead a life altogether celestial. There the weaker sex rival the most fervent solitaries in their virtues. A holy phalanx of pious Amazons, though not armed with bucklers and javelins, as formerly in the Greek republics, keep themselves continually on their guard to repulse the attacks of an enemy the most subtle and dangerous of any—an enemy who makes truce with no one, who spares neither age nor sex; and it is not rare there to see even women, superior in courage to the most robust men, carry off from the common enemy the most dazzling victories. The stars in the firmament are not so numerous as the solitaries in Egypt.

Compare the Egypt of former times, so estranged from God, so grossly plunged into the most extravagant super-

stitutions, with what it is at the present moment, and fall at the feet of Jesus Christ, to acknowledge his power; there is now no other philosophy relished there, but that which treats of the things connected with the true religion; and the inhabitants only speak of the gods their fathers worshipped, to deplore their errors, and express their abhorrence of the false science of the pretended philosophers who so long led them astray. Every where they render homage to the true wisdom our fishermen from Judea have introduced among them. The consequences of it are seen in the faith they profess; and in proportion to the purity of their belief, their manners are innocent and uniform; they are not contented with renouncing earthly things, and being crucified to the world; with them contemplation is not idleness; they exercise their bodies during the practice of it, in laborious occupations, the produce of which, distributed by the hands of charity, contributes to the support of the poor. Such is the employment they make of their time. In the night they watch, and sing praises to the Lord; in the day they pray, and labour with their hands, after the example of the great apostle; for if, indeed, a St. Paul, occupied as he was with the government of all the churches, could yet find time for manual labour, to which he consecrated the repose of the night, in order that he might have something wherewith to solace the miseries of the indigent, how much more are men who are removed from the tumult and distraction of cities called upon to occupy their leisure with every thing that may be useful, as well to others as to themselves. Such is the manner in which these virtuous solitaries argue. Let us apply the same reasoning to ourselves, whatever we may be, whether rich or poor; let us imitate these men, who, having no other possession than their hands and arms, devote themselves to the service of the unfortunate. Let us blush at the contrast which such conduct offers to us—we, who are

wallowing in superfluities, and still are unwilling to make the smallest sacrifice for those who are in want of every thing. What excuse can we make for our hard-heartedness? what pardon can we hope to obtain? Yet these very men, who now lead such holy and industrious lives, were once exactly the same as we are now, given up to all sorts of intemperance, making a god of their belly; nevertheless they were converted, because they were willing to be so—and now, faithfully keeping up in their hearts the fire of divine love, and directing their sublime flight towards heaven, they are become angels upon the earth. \* \* \* At break of day, even before it has dawned, anticipating the orb of light, they are already on their feet. Their heads clear, and free from all outward anxieties, they commence every day with canticles and sacred hymns, which they sing together in praise of the Sovereign of the universe, offering up to Him the homage of their gratitude, for all the favours universal and individual with which he loads the human race. More fortunate than even Adam himself in his terrestrial paradise, and comparable to the angels alone, they sing with them, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will towards men.”

When the sacred canticles are concluded, they bend themselves to the earth, they call upon the Lord, and pray to Him, not, as worldly men pray, for the riches of this life, which they hold in contempt, but for the true riches, with which they will not be afraid to appear at the awful tribunal of the Sovereign Judge of the quick and the dead; imploring him that no one among them may ever hear the appalling words, “I know you not,” but that with pure consciences, and in the performance of good works, they may safely accomplish their passage across the stormy ocean of this life. He who by his excellence takes the precedence among them, and whom they look up to as a father, directs these

holy exercises, which are every day repeated. Their prayer finished, they each begin to occupy themselves, and the produce of their labour is given to the poor.

It is not only by the simplicity of their singing, and the fervour of their prayers, that they edify all who come to see them, but likewise by the ardour with which they are always found delivering themselves up to the study of the Holy Scriptures. Apart from the places where they meet together, each one separately takes a book of the Sacred Writings, whether it may be Isaiah, or one of the Apostles, or any other ;—sometimes meditating on the divine nature, sometimes on the wonders of creation : on what strikes our senses, or what escapes them ; upon the fragility of this life, upon the hopes of that to come, and upon the happiness of the future. They feed on this spiritual nourishment, more strengthening to the soul than is the flesh of animals to the body ; sweeter than honey,—a honey surpassingly fragrant, more excellent than that with which John the Baptist sustained himself in the desert. Like bees they hover over and rest upon the divine books, to extract from them the most precious treasures, those lively impressions which the Holy Spirit delights to shed abroad in their hearts, as in vessels prepared for their reception, and where they are changed and transformed into the essence of those who thus receive them.

*Homily on St. Matthew.*

#### EDUCATION.

If you are careful to give your son a good education, he, in his turn, will bring up his children in the same principles ; so that there will be formed, as it were, a chain of good education and good conduct, from one to another of your descendants, which will mount up again to you as its primary link ; and which will be the fruit of your care and example.

There are few children wicked, excepting those of parents who have been negligent in forming their minds to piety. If they found in the lessons and examples of their fathers, the means of direction and support in the path of virtue, if to these domestic instructions were added such helps as the Church lavishes, in its holy assemblies, there can be no doubt that from the one and the other the most salutary fruits would be gathered in abundance.

There is no father who, when exhorting his son to the study of the Bar, does not hold out such inducements to him as, “ Look at that man, sprung from nothing—but by his talent in speaking he has raised himself to the highest honours—he has amassed an immense fortune—he has made an excellent match ; he has got a fine establishment ; every body honours and respects him.” Is it the acquirement of languages another may be anxious for, in his son ; he will say—“ You see how that man figures at court, what a part he takes in all public business ; it is entirely owing to his knowledge of the learned languages.” Such are the examples held out. It is always towards some motive of vain-glory that the eyes of the young are directed, by those who have the guidance of them ; never to the examples of the saints, whose virtues have opened for themselves the road to heaven : and if any one should ever advise mention to be made of them, he would be immediately looked upon as a man of days gone by, and at war with all the ideas now in vogue. When you act thus with respect to your children, you open a source of evil to them ; you deliver them up, as far as it rests with you, to the dominion of two cruel tyrants, the passion for riches, and that of vain glory, still more detestable. Either would be more than enough for the perversion of youth ; but united, they become as a foaming torrent, loaded with sand and mud, swallowing up the soul, and washing away from it the seeds of all good works.

## EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL.

IT is one of my sweetest satisfactions to assist, without ever failing to do so, at the reading which takes place three or four times in the week, at each of the solemnities of our martyrs, of the Epistles of St. Paul. Every time that his voice, stirring as the trumpet that called the tribes of Israel to the temple, sounds in my ears, it excites an ardour in my heart which transports and inflames it. His accents recall to me Him whom I love: he appears to me to be brought again to life, and to be present in person to give us himself his sublime instructions. In reading the Epistles of St. Paul, we ask ourselves whence it is that this Apostle has drawn a theology so lofty and so original; whence has he derived it? At what school has he learned it? Could it be in the humble workshop, where he laboured at his skins, to make his tents? Was he in the habit of raising his views so high, when, before his conversion, his thoughts and language differed in no respect from the thoughts and language of persons in a situation equally abject with his own? We may say, with certainty, that it is not the man who speaks, but the Holy Spirit, God alone, with his all-powerful grace: that Paul is only the instrument, and that it is the gift of God which operates in him, in all its magnificence. \* \* \*

During nearly four hundred years that St. Paul has been dead, how many commentators, how many doctors; how many interpreters have exercised themselves in the explanation of these admirable epistles! and so far from having exhausted them, they have only opened new fields for those who come after them to explore.

*Homily III.*

## FAMILY INSTRUCTION.

EVERY one of us can exercise in some measure the Apostolic functions in his own house. You are not called upon to

reform the Church ; but you may give salutary instruction to your wife. You have not to preach to a large congregation ; but you may correct the misconduct of your children or servants. Such a ministry does not exceed either your powers or your capacity ; it has far less difficulties than ours. I, for example, cannot gather you together, in this place, more than once or twice in the week ; but you, every hour in the day, have your wife, your children, and servants, under your eyes, and can make your voice heard among them. I can only propose general remedies for the patients under my care ; but you can prescribe specifically for those under yours. It is not merely advice, it is a positive injunction, the great Apostle gives us on this head. “ *If any provide not for his own, and specifically for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*”

“ *If you love me,*” says Jesus to Peter, “ *feed my sheep.*” These words are not addressed solely to pastors ; they concern us all, whatever we may be. Every one of us has some few sheep that he ought to take care of, and choose for them such pasturages as may suit them best. However small his flock may be, he ought in no wise to neglect it, for his Heavenly Father is pleased to delight himself in its welfare.

#### FAULTS IN THEIR COMMENCEMENT.

THE enemy of our salvation profits, in all ways, by our loss, and his artifices are inexhaustible. It is generally by tempting us into small faults that he begins, in order to lead us afterwards into others of a graver nature.

It is at its source that the evil must be stopped ; even though it may not arrive immediately at its height, it must not on that account be neglected. It will grow during your sleep—it is only a germ, but if you do not extirpate



it, it will bring forth the fruits of death. You will perhaps be amazed when I tell you that it is not so incumbent on us to watch over great crimes, as over faults which may appear to us small and indifferent; but we are sufficiently guarded against the first, by the horror they inspire in themselves; whilst we are not afraid of the others, precisely because they are not so apparent. From the habit of regarding them as trifling, the soul loses her energy in combating and subduing them: hence they soon gain a strength it is no longer possible to subdue; and from slight faults they grow into serious crimes. Judas saw no great harm in employing, for his own profit, a little of the money entrusted to his care. The Pharisees were not aware of any evils resulting from the pride with which they suffered themselves to be inflated. Yet avarice in the one, and vain glory in the other, brought about the violent death of Jesus Christ. Such is the history of all great crimes. It is never the first day that they present themselves to our imagination, that we are actually guilty of them. There is an inherent sense of shame in the soul, which it is difficult to annihilate at once. It is lost only by insensible degrees, and by a long chain of faults, which, in their commencement, appeared so slight as scarcely to deserve the name of fault to be applied to them.

*Homily on St. Matthew.*

#### THE FEAR OF THE LORD.

“*BLESSED are all they who fear the Lord.*” No one, then, is excluded from the felicity here spoken of,—bound or free, rich or poor, it matters not; in whatever circumstance of life we may be, we may all aspire to it, through the same medium,—the fear of the Lord. Speak not of felicity on any other condition,—it is only the mask of happiness. A man may have the reputation of being singularly fortunate; yet how many things may be wanting to him, to be

so in reality! He may be rich, and want health: in that case, he is more an object of pity than the poor man who is well. He may not be able to attain all the dignities he desires, and his ambition makes him the most abject of slaves. Perhaps at last he attains the summit of honour: is he more happy for it? No; enemies, public or private, domestic quarrels,—nay, the very desires of his own heart,—poison all his enjoyments . . . . . It is not so with him who fears the Lord . . . . . Is not the Prophet right, then, when he says, “*Blessed are all they that fear the Lord, and walk in His ways?*” One follows the other: fear would not do without works. Some, even with faith, yet lead perverse lives. It is not of them that the prophet speaks: he wills that every one should walk in the ways of the Lord,—in the only ways that lead to heaven, and the possession of God. He does not say the *way*, but the *ways*, because they are diverse and many. Some arrive at it by virginity, others in the state of marriage: some by the innocence of their lives, others by the sincerity of their repentance. Are you rich?—you may attain it by the use you make of the good things of this life, and by your charity to the destitute. Are you poor?—you may still practise deeds of compassion, if you cannot those of liberality, in visiting the sick, consoling the prisoner, giving the widow’s mite, if you have no more to give, and weeping with those who weep. Are you still worse off, reduced to the helplessness of Lazarus, chained like him to a bed of suffering, and in want even of the necessaries of life?—be then resigned, like him; abstaining from all murmurs, whether against Providence, or against the hard-hearted rich, who only insult your misery. Thus will you have a right to the same recompense that Lazarus found in the bosom of Abraham. There is in this sort of martyrdom not less nobleness of soul than in the heroic maintenance of his faith in the Christian, who, rather

than deny it, braves the torture and the flames, without emotion. The merit of Job was not in having forborne to sacrifice to idols, but in bearing his sufferings and misfortunes with submission.

*Homily on Psalm 127.*

#### FRIENDSHIP.

SOME persons who are, I know, well disposed towards me, have told me that I make my exordiums too long;—whether their remark be well founded or not, I thank them for it all the same. I can recognise the voice of friendship as well in censures as in eulogiums. To praise indiscriminately all that we do, good or bad, is no proof of love, but betrays a desire to deceive. The enemy who reproaches us is often of more real service to us, than is the friend who flatters us. Stripes, from the hands of some, may be more desirable than caresses from the hands of others. Judas kisses his master, but it is to betray him: Paul anathematizes the incestuous Corinthian, but it is to bring him back to virtue. The devil says to our first parents, “*Ye shall be as gods,*” and with this chimerical promise he draws down death upon them. The Lord says to them, “*Dust ye are, and to dust ye shall return;*” but, with this humiliating threat, he opens to them the gates of immortality.

The Apostle recommends us “*not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together.*” Nothing is, indeed, more dangerous than to be alone, without society, and without friends. You will tell me, perhaps, that those who seek their retreat among the mountains, live in solitude; nevertheless they do not want for friends, and though they live far from the tumult of cities, they have those with whom they live in perfect union, and have but one soul between them. They are united by the bonds of charity, and it is only to be enabled the better to practise that duty, that they

renounce the commerce with cities, where so many disorders reign: it is not among them that the ties of friendship are formed.

Friendship is a perfect agreement between hearts; a mutual support; a reciprocal indulgence; no suspicion can ever arise to disturb its harmony: but such a friendship can only exist among virtuous persons . . . . Nothing can equal the charm of a friendship of this sort. It was so that St. Paul loved, and he was ready to give his life for the objects of his love. What, indeed, cannot such an attachment do,—of what is it not capable? If you had all the treasures of the earth, you would not be so rich as in the possession of one true friend;—the mere sight of you is a source of delight to him; it is an absolute necessity for him every moment,—a necessity which is never satisfied, and is continually renewing itself; the name, the thought of his friend makes his heart leap,—every thing is in common between them—the same wishes, the same desires. I knew a man who, every time he prayed, put up his prayer first for his friend, and afterwards for himself. The very places that your friend has inhabited become as dear to you as he is himself; and if you happen to find yourself in them, when he may be at a distance, your tears begin to flow, at the remembrance of him which they awaken. To appreciate fully the sweets of a friendship like this, they must be known by experience. We can easily, and without fear, ask and accept a favour of a friend, and we love him the most when he requires some service at our hands; inso-much that if he uses any reserve towards us, in his demands, we reproach him for it, and are afflicted by it, for we consider every thing that we have as belonging equally to him. When any thing happens, as is too often the case, to disgust us with the world, it is only friendship that can charm away its vexations, and retain us in it. Oh, then it is

that the presence of a friend is more precious than the light of day! But what do I say? With a true friend there are none of those languors, those afflictions which make us weary of life.

*Homilies LXXXVIII., L., II.*

#### HOLY SCRIPTURES.

THERE is not any thing in the Scriptures which can be considered unimportant or useless,—there is not a single sentence of it which does not deserve to be meditated upon; for it is not the word of man, but the word of the Holy Spirit, and the least syllable of it contains a hidden treasure.

*Homily xv. On Genesis.*

#### HOPE.

HOPE is the greatest of all goods: it is the remedy for all the evils of the soul. It strengthens, nourishes, and fortifies all the virtues, it softens all afflictions, it weakens all temptations, and is the fruitful source of all good works.

*Homily vi. To the People of Antioch.*

#### HUMAN INDUSTRY.

GOD gives us the substance of things, but he leaves the modifications of them to the labour and industry of man. He makes the corn to grow, but it is for man to change it into bread; he gives us the grape, but not the wine; the wool, which it is for us to transform into garments; the stone, but not the edifice. Having made man in his own image, he associates him with Himself, in the work of creation. He produces the materials, and leaves creation to be completed and finished by the hands of man. God, all-powerful, has brought forth, out of nothing, every generic substance: man draws from these substances various forms and

combinations. Consider the origin of the arts: were they not founded by man? Who first invented the plough, learnt to fell wood, to fashion it, to transform it into naves and wheels, to close it by rivets tightly joined, to fabricate the yoke by which he subjugates the animals, companions of his labours? Wood and iron existed, but as yet inert: who, then, taught man that he must do all this to make a plough; that the hardness of iron could be mollified by fire, and that from so solid and rude a material the most delicate needle could be drawn out? Tell me, O man, who taught thee to reduce this enormous mass of stone into proportions so ingeniously combined? You will reply, perhaps, that it appears as if there must have been some miracle to impart these different knowledges. What! let me answer, in my turn, you have the image of God before your eyes, and you hesitate what reply to make! Behold, O my brother, in yourself, the principle wherein originate all the divers inventions which the genius of man, the imitator of God, has added to the domain of nature,—a genius truly admirable, when it contains itself within due bounds, but blameable the moment it presumes to pass them.

*Homily on Abraham and Isaac.*

#### HUMAN LIFE.

HUMAN life is a continual circle of agitations, which keep us in perpetual trouble and anxiety. The most lamentable consideration, however, is, that instead of endeavouring to prevent them, by making use of such precautions as we may have in our power, or, at any rate, to weaken their force, by bearing them with patience and courage, we abandon ourselves to them, and their bitterness poisons all our existence. We hear one lamenting his poverty, another his personal sufferings; a third murmurs at the trouble he has with his large establishment; a fourth complains of the

anxiety the education of his children gives him, or perhaps groans over the loss of them. Strange inconsistency ! It is not for the same, but for the most opposite causes, that mankind all seem agreed to join in one universal strain of lamentation. One says poverty is intolerable ; if so, then he who does not know what it is to be pinched by it, must necessarily be happy. It is a misfortune, says another, to have no children ; he who has a large family, then, ought to think himself extremely fortunate. Again, if we are to look upon public employments, the magistracy, and distinctions, as constituents of virtue and happiness, then those who place their enjoyment in private life, and freedom from the cares of business, can only be considered as unworthy citizens, and mistaken calculators. But how is it that we hear the rich complain just as much as the poor, and often more ? Why are not the magistrate, and the father surrounded by a fine family, happy ? Whence comes the disorder ?—from the thing itself, or from the mistaken view we take of it ? No, it is not in the fact itself, that we must look for the principle of the troubles and agitations to which we abandon ourselves, but in the frame of our own minds. When that is well regulated and happy, however we may be buffeted by tempests, we are still safe in harbour ; and where it is otherwise, in vain we may be in possession of every thing we desire,—we carry the storm in our own breasts.

It is with our moral as with our physical temperament : a vigorous constitution not only bears without inconveniences the variations of the atmosphere, but gains fresh strength by exercise, and the habit of bearing them ; a feeble and valetudinarian frame, on the contrary, may reside in the most temperate climate, without deriving any benefit from it—nay its weakness is often increased by the mildness of the air. The real cause of vexation and complaint is not in events, but in the heart.

## HUMILITY.

THE true secret of living in peace with all the world is, to have a humble opinion of ourselves. True goodness is invariably accompanied by mildness and humility. Humility is the first lesson which our Divine Legislator has given to men: it is with that he opens his code of salvation,—“Blessed are the poor in spirit.” The architect who proposes to himself to raise a lofty and magnificent edifice, begins by laying the foundation deep in proportion. Such is the rule pursued by Jesus Christ;—to the palace of the sublime philosophy he was about to introduce upon the earth, he gives humility for its base, well knowing that when once that virtue is thoroughly seated in the heart, all the others will come and range themselves around her. Vainly, on the contrary, might we seem, without that, to possess all the rest—we should soon find that we had been building only on sand, and labouring to no purpose.

*Homily XLIII.*

## IDLENESS.

SAINT Paul tells us himself, that he worked night and day, in order to avoid being a charge to any one. “*For ye remember, brethren,*” says he, “*our labour and travail; for, labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the Gospel of God.*” He did not seek, like many others, mere light occupations of amusement, to unbend his mind. This doctor of the universe, whose power taught the demons to respect him, whose vast solitudes embraced all the churches, and all the people of the whole world, he does not allow himself one moment of relaxation; and we, who have not the thousandth part of his cares, who cannot even conceive in our imagination the immensity of their detail, we can find nothing wherewith to occupy ourselves, and should



fancy ourselves degraded, by making the least use of our hands, in any sort of labour whatsoever !

From the beginning God has made it a law to man to labour ; not as a punishment and trouble, but as an exercise and instruction. Adam remained without labour, and forfeited the possession of Paradise. Paul laboured night and day without allowing himself one moment of rest, and he was caught up to the third heaven, where all the joys of paradise were opened to his view.

*Homily II., to the People of Antioch.*

#### IMPENITENCE.

IT is a greater evil not to feel contrition to God, after sin, than to commit the sin itself.

*Commentary on the 7th Psalm.*

#### INEQUALITY OF CONDITION.

THE inequality of conditions among men is demonstration sufficient, were there even not any other, of a Divine Providence. If there were no poor, there would no longer be any society, for there would no longer be any of the useful arts absolutely essential to life, and in which consist all the harmony of social order. It is by the hand of poverty that they are executed ; it is poverty that, whether they will or not, brings forth labour and industry. If every one was rich, every one would live in idleness ; every thing would run to confusion and disorder ; every thing, in short, come to an end.

*On Isaiah.*

#### INTEMPERANCE.

INTEMPERANCE is a Hydra with a hundred heads. She never stalks abroad unaccompanied by impurity, anger, and the most infamous irregularities. We have seen the bravest men, after having filled all the earth with their renown,

basely succumb before intemperance, become her captives, and tarnish all their glory. In conquering intemperance, we conquer, at the same time, all the monsters she brings forth.

*Homily on Gluttony and Inebriety.*

#### JEALOUSY.

WHAT most commonly poisons the marriage union is jealousy, which wages with it an intestine war, of all others the most cruel. Wretched passion! which becomes in time an actual insanity—a sort of possession of the evil one. It extends to every body, absent as well as present; servants as well as children; none are spared; all are attacked without a shadow of reason. Who can enjoy a moment's satisfaction, when every one is the subject of distrust, chagrin, and uneasiness? Whether the unfortunate goes out, whether he stays at home, every where he carries about with him the barbed dart; at every step he buries it deeper in his breast. Compared to the pangs of jealousy, all other sufferings are light; neither the horrors of indigence, the languor of an incurable disorder, the point of the sword, nor the devouring activity of flame, can be put in competition with them. Those only can describe them, to whom they are known by experience. The wife so dear to you, for whom you would willingly sacrifice your life; to be at her side only to suspect her fidelity—what torment without consolation! Night and day, imagination is busy, nursing plots, perfidies, and empoisonments. Your very couch seems as if of burning coals. Neither the visits of friends, the cares of business, the encountering of danger, the occurrence of fortunate events, whatever they may be—nothing, in short, can calm this all-absorbing frenzy. It feeds even upon revenge; and he who has thought to satisfy it, by immolating the object of it to his fury, has only inflamed it the more. Still more

is the woman, who gives herself up to this passion, to be pitied ; prepossessed against him who ought to be her support and consolation, to whom can she have recourse? whose aid implore? isolated as she is from the only heart into which she ought to pour forth her sorrows. Would she make confidants of her servants? Naturally suspicious and ungrateful, pardoning nothing in their superiors, however little may be the ground afforded for their secret malignity, they rejoice in the divisions they witness, and seldom fail to take advantage of them, in order that they may found on them the most culpable hopes.

He who once gives way to these fantastic visions, easily believes every idle report, and, in fact, loses the power of distinguishing truth from falsehood ; but too soon he will find himself inclining towards every thing that can aggravate his suspicions, rather than towards any thing which might prove their injustice. On both sides are alarms, flights, hostilities, without end ; no other method of escaping them than by the sin of reciprocal infidelities. What bitter tears! what days! what nights! what miserable festivals are in store for each! No longer any thing but threats, invectives, reproaches ; always on the alarm, or always in a state of stupefaction ; not a single instant that does not pay its tribute to grief—murmurs and lamentations. No one can come in, no one can go out ; not a word can be uttered, a glance cast, a sigh breathed, not even silence kept, without being remarked and dwelt upon, and subjected to the most rigorous examination, the most perfidious interpretations.

Silence is the only alternative ; that is to say, even the sorrowful privilege of complaining is denied. For a woman especially, such a state is a hell upon earth ; chained to a husband strong in the protection of the laws, blameable if she separates herself from him, miserable if she remains with him,—she leads a life worse than death.

*On Virginity.*

## NIGHTLY MEDITATION.

WHAT can we oppose to our painful conviction of the miseries of life? Let us constantly bear in mind the mercies of the Lord: the memory stored with his benefits, will no longer lay itself open to impressions from the misfortunes that may have befallen us. Such was the method adopted by the prophet-king. "*I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.*" "*Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.*" Not but that we ought at all times to keep God continually in our remembrance: but it is during the night, especially, that we are more particularly called to it, when the stillness all around, and the repose of the mind, lead the memory to consider what may be our individual state, and what will be our doom at the final judgment. If the thoughts endeavour to dwell upon these things during the day, a thousand things intervene, to divert and interrupt them. But the night comes, and then those dissipations are at an end. The quietness that surrounds us seems as a tranquil port for the soul. "*Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still,*" says David; and when we do so, we shall find ourselves all the better fitted, the next day, to resume the direction of our domestic affairs. By prayers like these it is that we obtain the aid and blessing of the Lord. . . . The night was not made to be spent entirely in sleep. Why did Jesus Christ pass whole nights upon the mountain, if not to instruct us by His example? It is during the night that all the plants respire; and it is then, also, that the soul of man is more penetrated, than they are with the dews of heaven; every thing that has been scorched up and exhausted during the day by the burning ardour of the sun, is refreshed and renewed during the night; the tears that are then shed extin-

guish the fire of the passions, damp our guilty desires, heal the wounds of the soul, and calm our griefs.

*Homily on the 6th Psalm.*

TO OLYMPIA (THE WIDOW OF THE PREFECT RUFINUS).

THE Winter, more rigorous in these climates than usual, has brought on me stomach complaints, which I have found harder to endure than even the inclemency of the seasons, and I have passed the last two months in a state of suffering worse than death. Indeed, I had not more life remaining in me than was sufficient to make me conscious of my torments. The Winter here is one continual night, for there is no difference between the night, and day-break, and mid-day; all this time I have spent in bed. I had enough to do to light my fire, and keep myself covered up; not daring to venture out for a single moment; still I suffered all the same, the most miserable tortures, frequent vomitings, constant headaches, loathing of food, wakefulness. Let me, however, spare you details which may try your sensibility too severely. I am now better; with the return of the Spring and a milder temperature, my health is restored, but I still require great attention and exactness in regimen. What augmented all my sufferings was hearing that you, dear and virtuous Olympia, had yourself been reduced almost to extremity. . . .

My consolations augment, in proportion as my troubles increase upon me. I begin to indulge the happiest hopes for the future; at present every thing seems to smile upon me, and I spread my sail before the favouring gale. It is a strange and unexampled thing, that all around me the winds should be raging furiously, the waves rising to the heavens, the clouds darkening, the night coming on, everywhere rocks, either in sight, or hidden under the waters, shoals and quicksands; and that, though cast upon so for-

midable an ocean, I am as tranquil as if I was already in port. Let these reflections lift you above the troubles and tempests of the present life. Give me tidings of your health; mine is re-established, and I enjoy great calmness of mind. I feel myself even stronger than formerly; I am breathing a pure air. The soldiers who conduct me to my new place of exile, show me all possible consideration, and serve me with the same attention that my own domestics would do. Such, indeed, is their affection for me, that they are not willing to leave any thing for others to do for me; they are always near me, like faithful guards, and each thinks himself fortunate when he can render me a service. The only thing that saddens me is not feeling assured on the subject of your health; give me good news respecting it, that I may have that satisfaction added to my others. . . .

Having fallen ill at Cesarea (in Cappadocia), I found there some skilful physicians, of science equal to their renown, whose care and affectionate solicitude contributed as much to my recovery as the judiciousness of their treatment. Do not accuse any one respecting the change in my exile. Glory be to God in all things. . . .

At last I begin to breathe again. I am at Cucusus, from which I now write to you. I have escaped at length from the dark train of sufferings of every description, which have not ceased to assail me, during the long route it was necessary for me to make, before reaching this place. I was not willing to inform you of it, until I had in some degree recovered myself: I should have caused you too lively a grief. . . .

Knowing as I do the courage with which you have conducted yourself on various occasions, I admire you, and deem you happy in the patience you manifest at the present time, and for the rewards which await you in the world to come. . . . Where could your enemies find in you a vulnerable point at which to aim their blow?—by the con-

fiscation of your property?—but this property is in your eyes no more than dust. By chasing you from your home and country?—but having always lived in quiet and retirement, and trodden under foot all the luxury of the age, you have lived in the most extensive and populous cities, as if they were deserts. Should they threaten you with death, you have anticipated these cruel men by meditating continually upon it; and should they even drag you to a scaffold, they would only take there a body already dead in penance: in a word, no one can suggest an ill against you, let it be what it may, which you have not already endured with heroic patience. I feel persuaded, yes, I am convinced, that in the transports of a pure and holy joy, you seem no longer to be detained within a mortal frame; and that you are ready, whenever the moment shall arrive, to lay it aside, with more ease than we throw off a simple garment. Rejoice, then, and be glad, not only for yourself, but for others, who have incurred a glorious doom; who have died, not in their beds, or in their houses, but in prisons, in chains, and torture. Weep and groan, not for them, but solely for the authors of their trials; for it is such lamentations, only, that are worthy of wisdom and virtue like yours. . . .

Another in my place might lament himself, and complain of the insupportable cold of the climate, the dreary loneliness of the country, the serious malady with which I am afflicted; but as for myself, leaving all these things out of the question, I complain of nothing, but of being separated from you; which is more grievous to me than illness, solitude, inclement seasons, and all put together. Nevertheless, the Winter renders me yet more sensible of our separation, for the only consolation which remained to me, that of being able to write to you, I am robbed of, by the arrival of the cold, which has intercepted all means of communication;

and by the prodigious quantity of snow we have here, which allows no one to come to us, or to set out to go to you. The dread of the Isaurians, which is every day increased, occasions a yet stronger obstacle to our correspondence. It puts every body to flight; all the houses are abandoned; walls and roofs are all that remain of the towns. It is only the caves and forests that are inhabited, for the people believe themselves safer in deserts than in cities. As for me, my life resembles that of the Nomades. I am not allowed to rest any where, such is the trouble and confusion in which we are here. The Isaurians every where make the most frightful ravages, killing, massacring, carrying away into captivity such as they have not put to death, and destroying their dwellings by fire. A number of young people, who had attempted to escape massacre by flight, perished among the snows. I am alone, every one having abandoned me. Glory to God in all things.

*Letters during his Exile.*

#### OPPOSITION OF PRACTICE TO PRECEPT.

IF any one were to come among us, from a country so far remote that he had never heard, in it, of the name of Jesus Christ; if, on his arrival, he were to be instructed in the precepts of the gospel, would he not, on seeing the disorderly lives of those who call themselves the disciples and followers of Christ, conceive, on the contrary, that they were his most determined enemies, and the most resolute opposers of his precepts; for in fact we live as if we were bent upon doing, in all things, exactly the contrary to all that he commands.

We reverse the order of things by a double disobedience to the precepts of Jesus Christ. He says to us, “*Seek not after the things of this life,*” and it is with them alone that we are perpetually occupied; again, he says, “*Seek after*



*heavenly things,”* and it is precisely of them that we think the least. Our most important business in this world is our preparation for the next; it is that which ought to form the most serious calculation of our lives; yet we do not bestow even a single hour on the meditation of so solemn a subject.

*To Demetrius on Compunction; Homily XXIII. on Matthew.*

PRAYER AFTER MEALS, OF THE SOLITARIES IN EGYPT.

BLESSED be thou, O God, who hast sustained me from my youth upwards, and who providest for the necessities of every living thing. Fill our hearts with joy and gladness, so that, possessing every thing we can desire, we may abound in all good works, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom belongs, with Thee, and thy Holy Spirit, glory, honour, and power for ever and ever, Amen. Glory to thee, O Lord, glory to the Holy Spirit, glory to the Almighty King, who thus gives us food for the body, to restore our strength! Penetrate us with thy Holy Spirit, so that we may be made pure and acceptable in thy sight; and that we may not be found covered with shame and confusion of face, in the day when thou wilt render to every one according to his works.

*Homily xv. on Matthew.*

PRESENT AND FUTURE LIFE.

God has created man for two lives—the present and the future. The one visible, the other invisible; one sensible and corporeal, the other spiritual; one which we feel ourselves in actual possession of, the other which we only know by faith to exist in us; one we hold in our own hands, the other we hope for. Of these two lives, the present is the lists, open to combats and trials; the future is the goal, to which we look for our crown and recompense. This is the voyage—that the port; this endures but for a moment, the other will know neither old age nor death.

*Homily on the Happiness of the Life to Come.*

## PROMULGATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.

LET us admire the difference between the first preachers of Christianity and the ancient sages of Greece, whose whole exterior manifested the pride of their thoughts. A man of no consequence whatsoever, a Galilean, a mere artisan, converts not only the entire population of Greece, but also the most distant countries. Plato, whom they held in such esteem, in three voyages that he took to Sicily, could not gain, with all the pomp of his eloquence, the slightest influence over the mind of the prince who governed it; whilst Paul, traversing the earth, every where subjects it to the apostolic yoke, uniting his sublime ministry to his mechanical employment. His time was divided between the two: he spent some hours every day at his trade; all the rest of it he devoted to his apostolic labours.

*Second Homily on the Epistle to the Romans.*

## SALVATION.

How is it possible, you ask, to attend to your salvation, in the midst of the world, and plunged into commerce with mankind? What is it you say, O my brother? It is not the place in which we are, that saves us, but the Christian life we lead in it. Adam did not make the less deplorable wreck of his happiness for being in Paradise. Lot, among the inhabitants of Sodom, an agitated sea, still found a safe harbour. Job was justified, sitting in the ashes: Saul upon his throne, lost both his kingdom here, and his crown of eternal life hereafter. Do not accuse the world, or the business that connects you with it: accuse only your own negligence, your want of zeal in prayer, your careless attendance at places of worship \* \* \* \* .

The daily labour of St. Paul threw no obstacles in the way of his piety. Do not say therefore that your employ

ment interferes with the discharge of your duties; it ought to bind you more closely to them. Poverty and labour make more saints than wealth and idleness.

*Homily XXI., to the People of Antioch.*

#### TEMPTATIONS.

WE must all expect temptations and combats, from the moment we enter upon our spiritual life. Scarcely had Jesus Christ come into the world than the impious Herod sought his life, and let loose all his fury against him. It is to God alone, who permits the temptation, to appoint when it is to terminate; and it is for man, who is proved and purified by it, to suffer it with patience, and even with joy. Let us not then shrink from those trials, remembering always that in them Jesus Christ fights with us, and for us. But why should there be these temptations? you ask. I answer, because they serve as the test of our virtue. Without doubt God could prevent them; but he does not will to do so, because he desires that we should have the opportunity of meriting somewhat from his goodness. He permits them, therefore, to exercise our faith and courage; he commands them as combats, in order that we may gain the victory. Nor have we any right, if we yield to it, to blame the temptation itself, but solely our own negligence, in not foreseeing, or our weakness in not more vigorously resisting it.

*Homily on the Epistle to the Romans.*

#### THEATRICAL REPRESENTATIONS.

PUBLIC spectacles influence the manners of a people more than is generally imagined—habituated to witness actions, and to listen to sentiments, connected with bloodshed, they are no longer afraid of seeing blood spilt, and become cruel and merciless.

*Homily XII. on Corinthians.*

## VENIAL FAULTS.

LET us not sleep unconcernedly on venial faults, or rather, on those we may deem to be such. Let us not forget, one single day, to take an account of all we may have suffered ourselves to commit, as well in our conversations as in our actions; let us punish ourselves for them, if we would avoid the punishment they would otherwise incur.

The venial faults of which you take no account, become the root of the greatest crimes. If we neglect the beginning, what power can we have over the end? This is the reason why Jesus Christ condemns so severely, not only open faults, but those which lead to them. Why all the prohibitions, apparently so minute, with which the ancient law was filled? Of what use all the precepts to abstain from such and such viands? It was to put the people on their guard, against more serious prevarications: the spark that you neglect to extinguish, may speedily be the means of kindling a violent conflagration.

Who are the least in the kingdom of heaven? Those who abandon themselves to venial faults.

*Homily XXI. on Psalm VI. and on St. Matthew.*

## USES OF WEALTH.

O YE rich people, ye, like the ecclesiastics, are only the depositories and distributors of money; that which the clergy receive from your liberality, is only given to them for the use of the poor. They are not authorised to scatter it about, at their own will or caprice; no more are you. It is a rigorous duty on your part, to make your treasures subservient to the solace of the indigent. You have nothing which belongs to yourself alone. Riches, the gift of speech, your existence itself, you owe all to God, for from Him alone is every thing derived. He has made you rich, as he

could have made you poor. It only remains with Him whether you may not, in a moment, be plunged into wretchedness. If He does not do so, it is only because He is willing to give you the opportunity of earning your reward. The riches that He has bestowed upon you, He can in an instant take away. He leaves them in your hands, in order that you may be associated with Him, by their means, in His Divine Providence. To pretend that they are so far exclusively your own, that you have a right to make an arbitrary and absolute use of them, is to be wanting in gratitude towards Him to whom it is due. Nature and religion equally teach you your dependance on Him. Your very existence is not your own ; how is it then that your riches are ? They belong rather to those for whom God has given them into your keeping. Riches are a common property, like the light of the sun, the air, or the productions of the earth. Riches are to society, what food is to the body ; should any one of the members wish to absorb the nutriment which is intended for the support of all, the body would perish entirely ; it is held together only by the requisite distribution of nourishment to divers parts. In the same manner general harmony is maintained only by the interchange of services betwixt the rich and the poor. To give and to receive, is the basis and theory of all human society.

*Tenth Homily, on the First Epistle to the Corinthians.*

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## *FATHERS OF THE LATIN CHURCH.*

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### SAINT HILARY,

*BISHOP OF POITIERS.*

BORN, 305; DIED, 368.

ST. HILARY was born at Poitiers, in the south of France, of pagan parents; his family was of high consideration in the country; he had received an excellent education, and was versed in all the sciences and philosophy of his time. He was married early to the object of his tenderest attachment, by whom he had a daughter no less beloved. His fortune was fully competent to his desires, and he seemed to be in possession of every thing, humanly speaking, requisite for human happiness: "And so I was," he says in an account he has given us of himself in his first book of his work "On the Trinity," "if, as for a time I endeavoured to persuade myself might be the case, happiness consists in leisure amidst abundance." But when was the rational and aspiring soul ever yet satisfied with a species of enjoyment which is equally common to the brute? "I soon began to feel this," he proceeds, "and to comprehend that the felicity of man ought to be of

a more exalted nature: I accordingly sought it in the study of truth, and the practice of virtue." Still he felt a void, an insufficiency within himself; and it seemed to him as if he could understand nothing to any profit, until he could form a right conception of the Author and origin of all things. The extravagance of paganism on this subject disgusted him, and the philosophy of the schools, though more dignified, was not more satisfactory. He was internally convinced that there must be One Eternal and Only God; but he languished for proofs of that of which he felt the most solemn interior conviction. Whilst he was in this frame of mind, happily for him, the books of the Old Testament fell into his hands, and he has given us an affecting account of the rapture, the transports with which he read in the writings of Moses, the declaration of the Eternal Himself,—"*I am that I am.*" In Isaiah,—"*The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.*" And the words of the Prophet-King, inspired from on high,—"*Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I fly from thy presence?*" "*If I ascend up into heaven thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there.*" "*If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.*"

“These words,” continues Hilary, “made me comprehend that God is in all, and above all; that every thing is submitted to his power; that he is the source of all beauty, and is Himself, beauty, sovereign, and incomprehensible.” The more he contemplated the nature of the Deity, as set forth in the Inspired Writings, the more passionately he longed to approach it, to be approximated with it, to render himself worthy of comprehending and adoring its Infinite Perfection. But here fresh trials awaited him. When he looked into himself, and saw the unmeasurable distance at which he was, from all that was truly pure and sublime, how could he hope,—continually liable to sin, as he felt himself, in all his thoughts, words, and actions,—how could he ever hope to approach that which was sinless? How could his weakness be made strong, his uncleanness clean, his corruption put on incorruption? “I was a prey,” says he, “to these cruel inquietudes, when I found, in the writings of the Evangelists and the Apostles, more than I had yet dared to hope for: especially in the commencement of the Gospel according to St. John, wherein I learned that God had a Son co-eternal, and of the same nature with himself, and that this same Son, the Word of God, had deigned to become man, in order that man might be able, through him, to become the child of God.” It was then, and then only, when Christ was thus revealed to him, with all the fulness of power that resides in Him, bodily,



and all the boundless mercy with which he is actuated towards us, that Hilary did indeed experience, in his own soul, the truth of his blessed Saviour's words,—“*Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*” And here we may well pause to take example by a heathen, who, rich, fortunate in his affections, cultivated in his mind, possessing the esteem of all around him, yet felt the insufficiency of mortal things to satisfy an immortal spirit; and passing from the contempt of sensual pleasures, into the inquiry after divine truths; from this to the belief in the One God, and thence into the conviction of the same God becoming his Saviour, his Redeemer, and his Regenerator. Thus the sacred volume, which Christians now too often turn over with indifference, as a mere matter of form, to this illustrious Pagan, into whose hands it had accidentally fallen, became, indeed, the Book of Life Eternal: full of gratitude for the mercy of the gift, he hastened to attest his faith by a public declaration of it, and had the happiness to see his wife and daughter, to whom he always remained attached with unabated tenderness, received into the Christian communion, at the same time with himself.

So truly did Hilary show forth his faith by the good works which are its natural fruits and best evidence, that when the bishopric of Poitiers became vacant in 350, he was called to it by the unanimous suffrages of the people. Scarcely had he assumed

his seat, when his zeal was roused by the sufferings of the Church under the persecutions of Constance, by whom he was banished into Phrygia for the firmness with which he at once exposed the dangerous tendency of the Arian heresy, and remonstrated with the emperor for suffering himself to become the instrument of its cruel and persecuting spirit. A very little temporising at this juncture would, as he has observed, have secured him the continuance of every comfort, and the possession of court favour; but he preferred saying with Job, "Though I die, I will hold fast by mine integrity." During his exile he wrote the "Treatise on the Trinity," which has always been considered as the most perfect of his works. The humility with which he commenced so exalted a theme, is sufficiently evident in the second book, where he complains that the audacity of heretics has forced the faithful to treat of things beyond human language, and to endeavour to explain mysteries that it is not even permitted to inquire after. "In place," says he, "of contenting ourselves with believing what we are taught by the apostles, endeavouring to live conformably to the precepts laid down to us, adoring the Father in the Son, and soliciting the graces of the Holy Spirit, we now see ourselves constrained to employ our feeble reasonings in defence of a doctrine which surpasses all the thoughts of man, and to appear presumptuous, because others are so."

It was a great grief to Hilary during his banish-

ment to receive no tidings of the churches in which he took so paternal an interest, and to the bishops and pastors of which he had continually written: at the end of three years, however, he was gladdened by hearing from them, lamenting the difficulty they found in conveying their sentiments to him, and informing him that they remained stedfast in the faith for which he was then in exile. They likewise requested of him to send them the details connected with the churches of the East, and especially respecting the number of creeds, or symbols, with which they were at that time harassed, under the disputatious spirit of the Arians. He accordingly composed for them his "Treatise on Synods," addressed to the bishops of France and Britain, in which he endeavoured as much as possible to conciliate all parties; and by so doing, notwithstanding the liberal and charitable spirit he displayed in it, he offended, as is generally the case in such instances, many of his friends, without bringing over any of his adversaries.

In 359, a new council having been convoked at Seleucia, the governor of Phrygia received orders to call to it all the bishops in his province, and included Hilary in the invitation. He accordingly attended, and stood forth undauntedly, to attest the apostolic faith, in its primitive simplicity, among the number of contending opinions with which he was surrounded. He then proceeded to Constantinople, and entreated the emperor to grant him an audience

in presence of the council then convened there. But the Arian bishops, dreading the effect of such a meeting on the mind of the emperor, prevailed upon him, instead of granting it, to send Hilary back to his Church; imagining that, at the great distance Poitiers was from the centre of their intrigues, they should be able to carry them on without interruption from his vigilance.

Hilary willingly prepared to return to his people; but, greatly moved to see the despotic power that the emperor allowed himself to exercise over matters of conscience, and the outrages to which the bishops, along with many of the people, were exposed, he could not refrain from remonstrating with him in an "Exordium," or, as it is more characteristically termed, an "*Invective*," which is at any rate creditable to his eloquence and zeal, whatever it may be to his worldly prudence, or even, in some parts, to his Christian forbearance.

In this composition he does not hesitate to tell the emperor to look upon himself as the real anti-Christ, and reproaches him with his perfidies, hypocrisies, and cruelties, in terms which, had the emperor seen them, might have gone far towards procuring himself the honours of the martyrdom he tells him he should a thousand times prefer, to the daily death of living under such a prince; but it is certain that this "Remonstrance" was not at that time published, though written with the intent to be so; nor indeed does it appear that it was ever presented to him.

The delight with which Hilary saw himself restored to his people was fully reciprocated on their part; and it is sufficient proof of the esteem in which he was held, that neither they nor his brother bishops would permit any one to be nominated to his seat during his absence. Though France was long comparatively free from the Arian influence, it yet had begun to make sufficient entry to require a timely and vigorous check. After successfully combating it in his own diocese, Hilary felt himself called upon to extend his labours in the same cause into Italy. He accordingly went, in 364, to Milan, where the Arian doctrines were publicly avowed by Auxentius, the bishop, who had sufficient influence with the Emperor Valentinian, who had succeeded to Julian and Jovian, to prevail upon him, notwithstanding he was himself of the orthodox faith, to command Hilary to quit the city. He therefore returned to Poitiers, where, the ensuing year, he published a manifesto against Auxentius, in which he eloquently set forth both his impieties and his treacheries, and denounced him as false alike to God and man.

This was the last occurrence that ruffled the earthly course of this sincere Christian and good man: he discharged the duties of his office, actively and conscientiously, three years longer, in which time he saw what he had always earnestly desired, his wife and daughter, who had embraced a life of seclusion, precede him to the regions of immortality; and, in 368, he went himself to give an account of

his labours to the Great Lord of the Vineyard, with full confidence in the tender mercies of his consideration for the errors or weaknesses of his servants.

“As a Christian,” says St. Jerome, “whether we consider the noble confession of his faith, the prudence of his conduct, or the energy of his eloquence, he has rendered himself celebrated throughout the whole of the Roman empire.” St. Augustine confirms this opinion, saying, that he was “venerable as a bishop, a firm defender of the orthodox faith; and as a man distinguished by the rarest qualities.” As an orator, his style is admirably characterised by St. Jerome as being the Rhone of Latin eloquence,—*eloquentiæ Latinæ Rhodanus*. And it does, indeed, flow in a full, rapid, impetuous stream, like that noble river. His reasoning is ample, and his arguments generally drawn from the best of all sources, viz., the Scriptures themselves. Milner compares him to Archbishop Leighton, and says, “he was to the West, what Athanasius was to the East,—the pillar of orthodoxy.” Nevertheless, whilst he combated one error of faith, he fell himself into another, and advanced the unsatisfactory and visionary opinion, that the passion of our Saviour, his nature being invulnerable, was without actual suffering, having merely the appearance of it, to the eyes of man.

Of such phantasies, it can only be said that where singularities of opinion have no way injured the moral excellence of those who may have entertained them, there is no end answered by dwelling on their absurdity.

The first work St. Hilary composed was his 'Commentary on St. Matthew,' about the year 352, and which is the most ancient of any existing production of the Latin Church. It is full of fine moral precepts, and though he seeks in it to explain the figurative and hidden sense of the Evangelists, he has yet, as he says, been careful not to accommodate the text to his manner of thinking, but his manner of thinking to the text. The style is nervous, and concise, sometimes even to obscurity. His 'Book on the Synods and Faith of the Eastern Church' was written six years after, in his exile; and displays a beautiful tone of Christian charity and moderation. St. Jerome esteemed it so highly, that he copied the whole of it with his own hand. His principal work, 'On the Trinity,' we have already mentioned. His letters, always the most individually interesting of any of the productions of eminent characters, are unfortunately lost, except one to his daughter Abra, when she was very young; urging her, in a sort of allegory written in the style of playful tenderness suited to her age, to embrace a religious life. To this letter were added two hymns, one for the morning, the other for the evening, of which only the former, beginning '*Lucis largitor splendide*,' is come down to us. He likewise wrote some other hymns, and has even had the '*Gloria in Excelsis*' attributed to him,—an honour which, however, has been equally claimed for many others.

SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS  
OF  
SAINT HILARY.

ANGELIC MINISTRATIONS.

IT is a truth founded upon the infallible authority of the Scriptures, that there are angels appointed to direct us in the way of salvation.

*Commentary on St. Matthew.*

WE are not thrown into the world by chance and without witnesses. All the immense space by which we are surrounded is peopled with angels, whose eyes are continually turned towards us. The most hardened in wickedness still shrinks from observation : the thought that he is watched, checks the criminal in the fury of his passion. Can the Christian, then, who knows that celestial spirits not only behold his every action, but also read his most secret thoughts, can he ever, in mere levity and thoughtlessness, deliver himself up to evil ?

*On the 13th Psalm.*

ART OF PLEASING.

THE apostle recommends us, from his own example, to endeavour to "*please all men.*" The true secret to succeed in this endeavour is to desire nothing for ourselves ; for it is very difficult to avoid giving offence in what we do merely for our own satisfaction ; as what may be agreeable to one may be disagreeable to another. But it necessarily follows that he who desires nothing for himself, and who seeks in



all things only the pleasure of others, must become agreeable to all, since he gratifies them by continually seeking their gratification, and shocks the self-love of no one by consulting his own.

*Commentary on the Psalms.*

“BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN.”

“*BLESSED are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.*” Who is it that Jesus Christ thus promises to indemnify for their sorrows by endless consolation? — Not those who weep over the loss of their natural ties, or the calumnies to which they may have been subjected, or the unjust treatment they may have received; but those who weep in reflecting on the sins they have committed. Those are they for whom he has reserved the felicities of heaven, which, most assuredly, they shall not fail to find.

*Commentary on St. Matthew.*

BREAD OF LIFE.

“*GIVE us this day our daily bread.*” Is there any thing which God desires more for us than that Jesus Christ, who is the bread of life, the bread which is come down from heaven, should dwell always within us? It is thus, then, we are taught in our daily prayer to ask for, and thus that we obtain, this, our daily bread.

*Fourth Council of Toledo.*

CHRISTIAN HUMILITY.

THE humility of the Christian ought not to be without a certain degree of courage, for, in the deference which we are commanded to pay to all, we nevertheless may retain that true freedom of the children of God, which lifts us above the great ones of the earth, and saves us from unworthy concessions to the authority that would constrain us to act against our consciences.

*Commentary on the Psalms.*

## CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

WHEN the just man performs all his actions with a pure and simple view to the divine honour and glory, as the apostle admonishes us, his whole life becomes one uninterrupted prayer; and as he passes his days and nights in the accomplishment of the Divine will, it is true to say, that the whole course of a holy life is a constant meditation on the love of God.

*On the 1st Psalm.*

## CHRISTIAN VIGILANCE.

WHAT wisdom may we recognise in the dispensation by which the Lord has concealed from us the knowledge of our last day! He willed, by so doing, to guard us from the temptations of falling into a state of criminal security. Our death, we know, is certain; the moment of its arrival is uncertain, and the future which succeeds is eternal and unalterable. It is then incumbent upon us to "*watch always*," to hold ourselves always in readiness; to be continually expecting the important and solemn summons which may, from one instant to another, call us from the abode of the living.

*Treatise on the Trinity, b. xii.*

## CHURCH OF CHRIST INDEPENDENT OF CIVIL AID.

WELL may we deplore the evil days on which we are fallen. When man will have it that God has need of the protection of man, and that the Church of Christ cannot stand without the help of the civil government. We invoke it, we call aloud for it; but answer me, O ye who declare yourselves the advocates of such a system, to what human suffrages had the apostles recourse when they began to preach the Gospel? Of what earthly powers did they borrow assistance, when they proclaimed the name of Jesus Christ, and

in that name turned nearly all the people of the earth from the worship of idols to that of the Living God? Did they seek their titles of recommendation in the courts and palaces of princes? They who sang their hymns of thanks and praises from the depths of their dungeons, under the fetters with which they were manacled, and their bodies still dropping blood from the wounds which the rods of their scourgers had inflicted on them. Was it by imperial ordinances that Paul, even when exhibited to the world as a spectacle, assembled together a church for Jesus Christ, from among those who gazed upon him? Paul, then, it should seem, sheltered himself under the names of Nero, of Vespasian, of Decius! He made patrons to himself of these men, whose avowed hatred of the Christian name was to contribute to its triumphs! No: the founders of our faith knew no arts but those of labouring with their hands for their own livelihood;—they were acquainted with no dwellings but the humble roofs beneath which they assembled their timid flocks—yet it was from under these roofs that they sallied forth to make the conquest of the world, traversing, and gaining over to the faith, cities, countries, whole nations, without taking any thought of senatorial edicts or regal commands. The more they were interdicted from preaching the name of Jesus Christ, the more their eagerness to publish it was kindled; but now, alas! the countenance of the great ones of the earth is imagined necessary for the maintenance of divine truth, and the cause of Jesus Christ is made to appear weak, because it suits the intrigue of party purposes to find protectors for it.

*Book against Auxentius.*

#### CLEMENCY OF GOD.

GOD does not judge men with inexorable severity. He bears in mind the weakness of their nature; he does not

measure their inconsistency and lightness with the immutability of his own divinity ; but, essentially just and merciful, he only requires of them what he knows to be in proportion to their strength.

*On the 118th Psalm.*

#### CONGENIALITY OF CONSOCIATION.

A MAN addicted to drunkenness, necessarily hates a man who is sober : the licentious hate the chaste, the unjust the just ; and the bad cannot endure the presence of the good, because they find it an insupportable burden on their own consciences. The good man, on the contrary, experiences an inexpressible gratification in merely seeing a virtuous person : as we naturally delight to find in our walks those plants which, according to the naturalists, rejoice the eyes and assuage pain.

*On the 118th Psalm.*

#### DENIAL OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

HE who allows himself habitually to break the commandments of God, will soon bring himself to deny his existence.

“ *The fool hath said in his heart there is no God,*” yet who that does but cast a passing glance upon creation can believe that there is no God ? It too often happens, however, that even whilst we are compelled by the force of truth to acknowledge a God, the charm of guilty pleasures tempts us to doubt his existence ; and thus our hearts, estranged by impiety, prompt us to say what we endeavour to believe against our own conviction.

*Commentary on the Psalms.*

#### DEPENDENCE ON GOD.

THERE is as much folly as impiety in not recognising our entire dependence on God : in placing the least confidence in ourselves, or imagining that we can have any good in us whatsoever, which does not come from the Lord.

*On the 13th Psalm.*

## FAITH.

THE two blind men who followed Jesus Christ, crying after him and saying, “*Thou son of David have mercy on us,*” did not believe, because they recovered their sight, but recovered their sight, because they believed. We may learn hence, that we must deserve by faith to obtain what we ask for, and not embrace faith, only because our prayer has been answered.

*Commentary on St. Matthew.*

## FEAR OF THE LORD.

“*BLESSED is the man that feareth the Lord; that delighteth greatly in his commandments.*” The prophet does not say blessed is he who obeyeth from a principle of fear, but blessed is he who executeth the will of the Lord, from the attachment of the heart; from voluntary affection. Fear teaches us not to neglect any precept, the transgression of which would be hurtful to us; but love is much more perfect; it determines the *will* to obedience. In the faithful soul the fear of the Lord consists entirely in love; and the principal duty of that love, is to obey his commandments and believe his promises.

*Commentary on the Psalms.*

## GIFTS OF THE MAGI.

IN the quality of the gifts offered to the infant Jesus by the Magi, they set forth all his attributes—as a king they laid gold at his feet; as God they offered him incense; as man they gave him myrrh. Thus the homage they rendered him became a proclamation of all the mysteries of the religion he was to establish. As man, he was to die; as God, he was to live again; as a king he was to judge all men.

*Commentary on St. Matthew.*

## GRACE.

GRACE is as necessary for the enlightenment of our understanding, as for the direction of our will.

*Commentary on the Psalms.*

## HAPPINESS.

WHAT have been the happiest days of our life? those in which we were living in the forgetfulness of God,—or those in which we were preparing ourselves for our eternal inheritance in the Heavens?

*Commentary on the Psalms.*

## HUMILITY.

THE best guarantee of fidelity is the distrust of ourselves.

*Commentary on the Psalms.*

## INCREDULITY.

INCREDULITY often arises from a weakness of understanding; a sort of folly, which would measure the most elevated things by its own weak standard of sight, and which believes that what it is not able to explain, or account for, cannot be: forgetting in what a narrow circle all our conceptions here below, are confined.

*On the Trinity, b. III.*

## INFINITY OF GOD.

GOD is self-existent and infinite. He is not contained, but containeth all things. He is before time—he has created the ages. If you imagine that you can put bounds to his nature and existence, give the utmost range to your thoughts, you will still find him every where, and always. You may exhaust numbers, but you cannot exhaust the nature of God. Put in motion every faculty of your soul, endeavour to comprehend the whole of God in your mind—still you will possess nothing: the whole has a remainder, and the re-

mainder is infinite as the whole. Such is God, such the impenetrability of his nature. He is ineffable: in no language can we find words which can convey an idea of him. All our senses are suspended when we endeavour to comprehend him, and our overwhelmed perceptions are annihilated in admiration.

*On the Trinity, b. II.*

#### INTERROGATORY OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE Arians have laid much stress on the passage in the Evangelists, where Jesus Christ, answering a young man who asks him the way to obtain eternal life, says, “ *Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, and that is God;*” but I will appeal to any candid person to say, whether the sense of the answer is not always determined by that of the question? Is it because the young man calls him *good*, that Jesus Christ reprehends him? Is it not rather because he gives him this title, merely with reference to him as a doctor of the law, and not as God? It was to explain to the young man in what sense it was, that the quality of *good* applied to him, that he said, “ *There is none good, save one, and that is God;*” and at the same instant he proved to him that he was *good* and *God*, by promising him a treasure in heaven, if he would follow him.

*On the Trinity, b. IX.*

#### LIBERALITY OF SOUL.

THERE is nothing close or narrow in the soul of the Christian. It is the passions that contract our liberal feelings: thus it is that the soul in a state of sin is too much restrained, too bounded, for God to dwell in. To the sinner, every thing is a difficulty. His conscience, embarrassed by his guilty desires, cannot expand itself.

*On the 18th Psalm.*

## THE LORD'S PRAYER.

WHEN we ask of God that *his name may be hallowed*, that *his kingdom may come*, that his will may be done, it is certainly not for him, but for ourselves alone. What profit can he receive from the homages we thus express? but to ourselves they are of the last, the highest importance. In them we ask to do nothing which may not tend to the glory of the Lord; to see his reign establish itself more completely, from day to day, in the interior of our souls; and to have no other will than that which shall conduct us to praise Him eternally in the heavens.

*Commentary on the Psalms.*

## LOVE OF GOD.

God asks our love: nay, requires it. Is it, then, that he derives advantage from it? No; it is solely for our own benefit, out of his unceasing goodness; to enable us to enjoy the delights of a perfect union with him.

*Commentary on the Psalms.*

## MERCY OF GOD.

God does not seize the moment of the commission of crime to punish the criminal. He is willing to remember how weak his erring creatures are; he waits, he defers his chastisement, to give the guilty time to return to Him, by the path of repentance. Adorable tempering of justice with mercy!

*Commentary on the Psalms.*

## MYSTERIES OF RELIGION.

FEEDLE creature! you are ignorant of the nature even of your own existence, and you would attempt to fathom that of your Creator! You are altogether an enigma to yourself—your reasoning powers, your organs, your movements, all



astonish you, and check you at every step of your inquiries. You acknowledge it—you are not ashamed to confess your ignorance of every thing pertaining to yourself, and yet you dare presumptuously to argue upon the essence of the Deity !

*Letter to the Emperor Constance.*

#### PATIENCE OF GOD.

WHAT I adore and admire the most in God, is less his having created the heavens, for He is all-sufficient ; less his having formed the earth, for He is power itself ; or for his having animated man, for He is the principle of life ; but for his being merciful, at the same time that He is just ; being patient, although He is God, all-powerful.

*Commentary on the Psalms.*

#### PERTINACITY IN ARGUMENT.

AN idea may be taken up from mere caprice, and yet be maintained with exceeding obstinacy. The inclination we all have naturally to set ourselves in opposition to whatsoever may oppose us, cannot be expected to correct itself in a will which is not under the control of reason ; instead of really desiring to be instructed on the point we may discuss, we are intent only on finding arguments to support us in the view we are determined to take of it ; and we bring forward all the learning, knowledge, or ability we may possess, to strengthen the opinions to which we are resolved to adhere. Thus the question, however we may disguise it, turns rather on the name, than on the nature of the thing discussed ; it no longer treats of what is true, but of what we wish to make appear so.

*Treatise on the Trinity, b. x.*

## POLEMICAL DISPUTES.

WE see but too fatally how many systems of belief have sprung up since the convocation of the Council of Nice\*. We run from novelty to novelty—cavilling upon authors and sects—putting into the form of problems, truths which all the world was contented to accept simply as such; condemning one, rejecting another, and disputing even upon the essence of God himself. And where, amidst all these contentions, are to be found the disciples of Jesus Christ? Alas! scarcely any where! We are blown about here and there, by every contrary wind of opposing doctrines. Some preach to deceive; others listen to lose themselves. The faith of yesterday is not the faith of to-day, and will not be that of to-morrow—the day after perhaps it may be re-established—then comes a third and fourth who changes and modifies according to his own ideas, and ends by neither approving nor disapproving. In the midst of all these uncertainties, faith is banished from the heart, and good works are no longer to be found in the life.

*Letter to the Emperor Constance.*

## PRESENTS.

THE rule that we ought to prescribe to ourselves as to receiving presents is, never to rate our services as the price of them; and to consent to accept them only from those to whom it may be useful or agreeable to make them,—never from any one who may find it inconvenient to render such a tribute. To take them solely to oblige others, not to enrich ourselves at their expense; rather through a spirit of charity, and mutual love, than of self-interest; to submit to them as a mark of respect, not as the tribute of fear.

*On the 13th Psalm.*

\* The Arians and Semi-Arians had at this time published no less than sixteen professions of faith.

## THE PRIEST.

It is not enough for a priest to be a good moral character. For as his life ought to be without reproach, so ought his ministry to be adorned with learning. For if he be pious without being well instructed, he will not be useful to others; and if he be well instructed without being pious, his doctrine will carry no weight;—his sanctity, then, ought to be supported by his learning, and his precepts to be recommended by the purity of his practice.

*On the Trinity, b. VIII.*

## RICHES.

THE possession of riches is no crime in itself, provided we know how to regulate the use of them. We are even justified in retaining them; for, as they are the source of almsgiving, and beneficial actions, we acquit ourselves of our duty, in dispensing them among those who have nothing. It is, then, not an evil to have wealth, but to possess it in a manner which may be hurtful to us: it is the desire and anxiety to enrich ourselves, that is dangerous. Riches are a heavy burden on a tender conscience; for it is difficult for one who is desirous of serving God to search after them, and endeavour to increase them, without exposing himself to some of the vices that are usually attendant in their train; and hence it is that Jesus Christ has said, "*a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of Heaven.*"

Riches render their possessors insolent; the vain confidence they place in their wealth effaces the fear of the Lord from their minds; and they become so blind as not to perceive that they are more and more indebted to God, the richer they become—that gratitude renders it a duty in them to offer up their thanks to Him who has made them what they are; and that the crime of avarice is yet more reprehensible in them, as their opulence deprives them of

the excuse of necessity. Strange miscalculation, to put our confidence in things of so perishable a nature! to forget God, for the gold which God has made! to suppose that, because we are rich, we can be any thing in ourselves but what we were at our birth; or that, dying, we can take our riches away with us. Happy those who, during life, shall have made a good use of them, in sharing them with such of their fellow-creatures as have nothing.

*Commentary on St. Matthew.*

#### SINGLENESS OF HEART.

CHRIST teaches that only those who become again, as it were, little children, and by the simplicity of that age cut off the inordinate affections of vice, can enter the kingdom of heaven. These follow and obey their father, love their mother, are strangers to covetousness, ill-will, hatred, arrogance, and lying, and are inclined easily to believe what they hear. This disposition of affections opens the way to heaven. We must, therefore, return to the simplicity of little children, in which we shall bear some resemblance to our Lord's humility.

*On St. Matthew.*

#### TERRESTRIAL CARES.

"TAKE no thought for the morrow," Jesus says. Vain disquietudes belong only to the infidel, who knows nothing beyond this world, and its possessions; who is ignorant of the world to come, and its joys; and whose thoughts are all held captive in the narrow bounds of the present life.

*Commentary on St. Matthew.*

#### TRUE RICHES AND TRUE WISDOM.

PAUL desires to know nothing but Christ, and Christ crucified. In this knowledge we possess more than all the sciences, and all the riches, of the earth can offer to us.

*Commentary on the Psalms.*



## SAINT AMBROSE,

*ARCHBISHOP OF MILAN.*

BORN, 340 ; DIED, 397.

SAINT AMBROSE was born at Treves. His father, a man of illustrious family, was Pretorian Prefect of the Gauls, and his jurisdiction included, besides France, a large portion of Italy and Germany, five Roman provinces, eight in Spain, and Mauritania in Africa. He died whilst his son was yet an infant: the early instruction of the youthful Ambrose was, however, carefully attended to by his mother, who was a Christian; and by his sister Marcellina, who had devoted herself to a state of celibacy, from religious motives, and who took peculiar pains to instruct him in the principles of Christianity.

Treves was at this time the Rome of Gaul, the centre of politeness, science, and the arts; the most learned professors were attracted to it by the liberality of its emoluments; and young men, distinguished for their talents, gladly resorted to it, on account of the reputation of its professors. The presence of the imperial court added to its importance; and it was not the smallest part of its glories that it had Ausonius, the poet, to sing them, and for a time,

the admirable St. Paulinus, afterwards Bishop of Nola, for its bishop.

When the education of Ambrose was completed, he chose the profession of the law, and distinguished himself, from the commencement of his career, as a pleader; insomuch, that he soon attracted the notice of Anicius Probus, Pretorian Prefect of Italy, by whom he was nominated Governor of Liguria. Anicius exhorted him, at the moment of his setting out to assume his authority, to act towards his people rather as a bishop than a judge; and the probity and mildness of his administration for the five years he held it, sufficiently proved that the exhortation was not given in vain. At length one of the seemingly unexpected turns of fortune, which, under Divine Providence, often call men of eminent piety into the situation wherein they are most calculated to be useful, changed the nature of his pursuits and destiny.

The city of Milan had been unfortunate enough, for twenty years, to have for its bishop, that Auxentius, the Arian, who, as we have already mentioned, during the whole period of his occupying the episcopal chair, persecuted the orthodox Christians with equal fury and malice. In 374, however, he died, and left the city divided into two parties, who might, it was apprehended, be brought into sanguinary collision with each other, on the occasion of choosing a successor to him. The bishops of the province met together, to consult on the

election. The Emperor Valentinian refused to listen to their entreaties that he would make the nomination, and told them that they, from their more profound study of the sacred writings, ought to know better than he, the qualifications necessary for so important a station. "Only choose a man," said he, "fit to instruct by life as well as by doctrine, and we ourselves will readily submit our sceptres to his counsels and direction; and, as men obnoxious to human frailty, will receive his reproofs and admonitions as wholesome physic."

The city meantime became impatient; every thing threatened a tumult. Ambrose, hearing of the disturbance, hastened to the church where the meeting for the purpose of nominating the new bishop was held, in order to check by his counsels the fermentation of the public mind. Whilst he was in the midst of a discourse on the necessity of paying respect to the existing laws, which was listened to by his auditors with the most profound attention, a child, or rather an infant, called out from the crowd, "Ambrose, bishop!" The voice of innocence was hailed by the people, whose feelings were already in a state of excitement, favourable to the event, as a dictate from heaven; and in compliance with it, both parties joined, with enthusiastic acclamations, in nominating him to the vacant chair.

Ambrose, far from desiring this honour, protested against it in the most vehement manner, declared that he was unfitted for it both by temper and



inclination, and even went so far, as some have related, as not only to give into the appearance of laxity of moral conduct, in order to persuade the people that his habits were not sufficiently pure for the sacred functions they wished to thrust upon him, but to cause extraordinary rigours to be used towards some malefactors in his jurisdiction; even to the subjecting of them to torture, in order to give an idea that his reputation for humanity was unfounded. If this statement, which all the rest of his life is at utter variance with, be true, a conduct so opposite to his natural character could not have been carried on for more than a very brief period, as within eight days after his being nominated, he was baptized, being at that time only a Catechumen; and we have already seen, how solemn a ceremony this was held in the early Church, and the serious duties of self-examination and confession by which it was preceded. At any rate, however, the means he had recourse to, did not answer the end he wished; and, finding the people still persist in demanding him, he took flight, was taken, took flight again; hid himself in the country-house of a friend, and only at last returned to the city, for fear of exposing that friend to the anger of the emperor. Such were the unjustifiable steps into which some of the best men of that day were betrayed, by the conscientious awe with which the idea of unworthily undertaking a sacred office inspired them: an excess of humility, nevertheless, much more pardonable than the opposite conduct of

the present age, of rushing into the holy ministry, with almost less anxiety than into any other worldly calling, as this also is too generally become.

No sooner had Ambrose assumed, however contrary to his inclinations, the episcopal functions, than he turned all his thoughts and devoted all his abilities to acquit himself of them conscientiously. He immediately bestowed all his gold and silver upon the poor, and made over all his lands to the Church for their benefit; reserving only an annual income from them for the use of his sister Marcellina, and committing the care of his family to his brother Satyrus. He now no longer considered his time as at his own disposal, and regarded his talents solely as materials granted him for the performance of a task of which he would, when ended, have to give a solemn and exact account. Conscious of a deficiency of knowledge in spiritual things, he not only attended closely to the study of the Scriptures, but sought with great humility the advice of Simplician, a presbyter of Rome, of eminent learning and piety, whom he prevailed on to take up his residence in Milan, and whom he greatly revered and loved. The day was not long enough for the duties he took upon himself. He regulated by his advice and exhortations, both the spiritual and temporal affairs of his people, who were constantly crowding to him for his counsels; for the pious-minded among the early Christians sedulously avoiding, according to St. Paul's injunction to the Corinthians, going to law, "brother

with brother, and that before unbelievers," referred all their differences to the decision of their bishops, the field of whose labours was by this practice greatly extended. He surveyed the hospital, looked after the poor, received every one with benevolence, and occupied himself so incessantly for the benefit of others, that he could with difficulty secure a few moments to himself for reading and meditation. Every Sunday, and sometimes for many days together, he preached in the Basilique of Milan; his voice was feeble, but the nobleness of his thoughts, the perspicuity of his ideas, the variety of his erudition, and the fertility and elegance of his language, drew around him crowds of attentive and admiring listeners, and spread his reputation so widely, that St. Basil wrote to him, from the recesses of the East, to congratulate him on his success in the discharge of his important duties; and many females crossed the seas from Africa to receive the veil from the hands of the Archbishop of Milan. Perhaps, indeed, Ambrose carried his admiration of conventual life too far: prepossessed in its favour from his earliest years, by the virtues he had seen his sister Marcelina display in it, he made it the perpetual theme of his panegyric, and drew upon himself, in consequence, the displeasure of many noble families, whose daughters were thus won by his eloquence to devote themselves to seclusion. He replied to their censures, by asking if they could produce a single instance of a young man looking for a wife, and finding any difficulty in obtaining one.

The times were such as to call forth all the varied talents of Ambrose, not less as a statesman than a priest: no one ever fulfilled better the duties of that religious tribunal, as it may be termed, by which the laws of Christianity interposed their benevolent and equalizing influence, between the abuses of a power perpetually changing, but always absolute, and the miseries of a people governed without any fixed principles of civil liberty or political justice. Hence he stands forth in the history of his times, as the sincere and courageous adviser of crowned heads, the defender of the oppressed, whether among Pagans or Christians; and the minister, in his sacerdotal garb, of peace, clemency, and the public good. Valentinian always received his admonitions with reverence: "I knew the honesty of your character before to-day," said he, on Ambrose representing, with great plainness, the faults of some in authority, "when I consented to your ordination; follow the divine rules, and prescribe for the maladies into which we are all prone to fall."

Valentinian died in 375; he was succeeded by his two sons, who shared between them the Western Empire, and whom he had recommended, on his death-bed, to the care of Ambrose. Gratian, the elder of these princes, who was the pupil of the poet Ausonius, and who, during his short life, like our Edward VI., gave promise of every Christian excellence, had Gaul and Britain for his portion; and Valentinian the Second, an infant at the time of his

father's death, retained, under the guardianship of his mother, the Empress Justina, Italy, Illyria, and Africa.

Every act of Gratian's short reign showed him to be more really under the influence of vital and practical religion, than any of his predecessors had ever been. On his assuming the purple, he refused the habit of high priest, which, along with the title, had always been given to the Roman princes, observing that it became not a Christian to lend himself to things idolatrous in their nature. Destitute of personal ambition, and anxious only for the good of the states, he chose Theodosius, afterwards justly celebrated as the Great, from an obscure rank in the army, for his colleague in the East, solely on account of his abilities; and remained himself at Rome, managing there the government of his infant brother, with the care and affection of a father. Thirsting after divine knowledge, and conscious of his own ignorance, he wrote to Ambrose at Milan, in the following affectionate and humble strain:—

“Gratian Augustus to Ambrose, the religious priest of Almighty God.

“I much desire to be present with him, whom I remember absent, and with whom I am united in mind. Come to me immediately, holy priest, that you may teach the doctrine of salvation to one who truly believes; not that he may study for contention, or seek to embrace God rather verbally than mentally; but that the revelation of the Divinity may

dwell more intimately in my breast. For He whom I do not deny, whom I own as my Lord and my God, will not fail to teach me . . . . I am weak and frail: I extol him as I can, not as the Divinity deserves.”

The satisfaction this letter must have given Ambrose may easily be imagined. “Most Christian prince,” said he, in his reply, “modesty, not want of affection, has hitherto prevented me from waiting upon you: if, however, I am not with you personally, I have been present with my prayers, in which consists still more the duty of a pastor. I use no flattery: you need it not, and it is quite foreign to my office. Our Judge, whom you confess, and in whom you piously believe, knows that my bowels are refreshed with your faith, your salvation, and your glory; and that I pray for you, not only as in public duty bound, but even with personal affection. He alone hath taught you, who said, ‘*He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father.*’”

It is scarcely necessary to say that Gratian was tenderly attached to Ambrose; but the Empress Justina regarded this partiality with a jealous eye, not more for the restraint it might be on her own power, than for a personal dislike she had to Ambrose, on account of his opposition to the Arian tenets, of which she was a warm partisan. Unhappily Gratian met with his death, when only in the twenty-fourth year of his age, through a revolt among his troops in Britain, under the command of Maximus; being betrayed

in his flight to Lyons by Adragothias, at a feast to which he had invited him, pledging himself to him, upon the Gospel, for his safety.

This event brought Justina, in the moment of affliction, to a sense of the virtues and influence of the man, whose name was almost the last word heard from the lips of her dying son, and whom she was conscious of having so long treated with unjustifiable contempt. She flew to him in her distress, and, placing the infant Emperor Valentinian in his arms, conjured him to protect him, and to prevent the war into which all the court dreaded that Maximus, who, after Gratian's death, had entered Treves in triumph, would plunge the Western Empire. Already in imagination they saw him crossing the Alps, with his insurgent forces, to carry destruction before him. Ambrose alone was firm and undismayed: he set off himself to the camp of Maximus, and by the justice of his arguments, strengthened by the charms of his eloquence, obtained a promise from him that he would not invade Italy. But a year afterwards the ambitious chief, regretting the delay of his criminal enterprise, complained that he had been bewildered by the magic of Ambrose's words; and it should seem, by his subsequent conduct, that this was sufficient excuse to himself for breaking the promise he had given him, under their influence.

Meanwhile, however, whilst the Court of Milan had scarcely recovered its alarm, the public mind was agitated by new disputes on points of religious

faith. Among the Pagans were still to be found great part of the Roman Senate, and many noble families, who piqued themselves on the constancy with which they adhered to the religion of their ancestors; they made a last effort, in 374, aided by the talents of Symmachus, one of the most accomplished orators of his age, for the re-establishment of their worship, petitioning the Emperor Valentinian for the restoration of the altar of Victory, and the salaries of the priests and vestals connected with it. It was easy, however, for Ambrose to refute the weak and groundless arguments of the Pagan orator on this occasion, particularly as he could back his own by the undeniable fact of the majority of the Roman senators being at that time Christians, and of course opposed to the smallest countenance of the Pagan rites. But in the spring of the following year he found he had much more dangerous and powerful foes to contend with, in the Arians, openly protected as they were by the dowager empress. Forgetful of all her obligations to Ambrose, she sent her orders to him to yield up to the Arians the possession of the Portian Church, beyond the walls of Milan. The bishop refused: the empress, exceedingly irritated, sent officers immediately, headed by Valentinian himself, to seize one of the churches in the city. Ambrose, in the warmth of his zeal, told them it was not for the priest to deliver up the temple.

The people, attached to Ambrose, rose on all sides;



the soldiers were sent to the Portian church to invest it, and to decorate it with flags, which were immediately torn down by the people. At this moment of disorder and mutual irritation, an Arian priest, being met by the opposite party, was in the greatest danger of being massacred: Ambrose, then at the altar, hearing of the Arian's danger, shed tears, and put up a fervent prayer that the blood of man might not be spilt in his defence; at the same time he sent a number of his own friends to rescue the unfortunate Arian, which they succeeded in doing. The court, as a punishment for this tumult, condemned the citizens to pay a fine of two hundred pounds' weight in gold; they replied, they were willing to pay a much larger sum, provided they might retain the peaceable possession of the true faith. Nevertheless, the civil war, if so it might be termed, continued in Milan many days; a number of persons were arrested, and Ambrose himself was summoned before the tribune of the emperor.

"If you ask me for any thing that is my own," he said, "gold, silver, or lands, I will not withhold it, though all my possessions ought to belong to the poor alone; but the things that are God's, cannot be submitted to the imperial power. Load me with fetters, condemn me to death—it will be a joy to me. You will not find me making a rampart, for my defence, of this crowd of people. I shall not embrace the altars to preserve my life; it will be sweeter to me to sacrifice it in their honour."

Ambrose then returned to the ancient church, and passed all the day there. At the sight of him, the soldiers, who had been sent to invest the edifice, joined themselves to the people, and listened, with them, to their bishop's discourse upon patience; illustrative of the history of Job, which had been read in the service of the day. The empress was at length obliged to yield to the firmness and popularity of the man she so ardently desired to destroy. The soldiers were removed, the prisons opened, the fine on the people remitted. The young Valentinian, however, imbibing his mother's sentiments, and jealous of the man whom he was ungrateful enough to join in persecuting, could not help complaining to his officers that they would have delivered him up, himself, bound hand and foot, to Ambrose, if he had required it. A fearful extent, it must be acknowledged, of ecclesiastical influence, if misused, as it was in succeeding ages, for the purposes of avarice and ambition; but in the instance of Ambrose, most worthily and happily exerted in the duties of his office.

Somemonths after, the empress renewed her machinations against the Archbishop, endeavoured to raise an Arian preacher to his seat, threatened him with exile, and once more filled the Christian churches with soldiers. It was then that Ambrose introduced into the church of Milan, whence it was propagated throughout the western empire, the use of chants and hymns, as practised long before in the East.

The enthusiasm of the people was raised to the utmost by this inspiring addition to their form of worship; they passed all the night in the church, to guard the person of their bishop. At day-break, the pealing anthem was heard to ascend from it, in all the majesty of choral harmony; Ambrose afterwards rose to address his people, and the church resounded with their protestations, that they would die for him and their religion.

The court of Milan had no power to contend with the ascendancy of such a man; they moreover saw themselves reduced to solicit once more the aid of his talents. Maximus, regardless of his word, was approaching Italy, and Ambrose was sent to try the force of his eloquence upon him a second time, at the city of Treves, where he resided with his court and army. He, however, now exerted it without success, and only returned to Milan in time to warn it of the approaching invasion of the usurper. All fled to whom the means of flight were open, but Ambrose remained; Valentinian and his mother went into the East to implore the assistance of Theodosius the Great. Maximus, meanwhile, arrived without opposition at Rome, and the altar of Victory was re-established amid the shouts of rejoicing Pagans. The next year, however, both the fortunes of the usurper and the altar of the goddess were reversed by the invincible arm of Theodosius, who had married the sister of Valentinian, whose power he every where restored.

It was during the residence of Theodosius in Milan that, perhaps, the most striking incident in the life of Ambrose took place. Theodosius had all the qualities that make a hero, excepting that of knowing how to command himself during his first emotions of anger. Irritated by a series of unjustifiable tumults that had taken place in Thessalonica, he expressed his determination to visit the city with severe and summary punishment: Ambrose, knowing the infirmity of the royal victor's temper, and dreading that its effects might fall alike upon the innocent as the guilty, went immediately, on hearing this, into the presence of the emperor, to intercede for the delinquents. He left him in the full hope of having ensured their pardon; when, to his grief and horror, he learned soon after, that, on quitting the emperor's presence, the principal officers of the court had gained access to him, and prevailed upon him to retract his promise of mercy, and to sign an order for military execution to be served upon the unfortunate inhabitants of Thessalonica; in consequence of which, seven thousand of them had been indiscriminately massacred in three hours, without accusation and without trial. One single instance of the horror of this transaction, will suffice to show its barbarity. The Circus was full of citizens, attracted thither by the games, which they, unconscious of any impending evil, were, as usual, regarding with the most absorbing interest; suddenly, it was surrounded by soldiers, concealed in the neighbouring

houses. A merchant who had taken his two sons to see the spectacle: finding himself so unexpectedly environed by assassins, offered his life and fortune for the ransom of his children. The soldiers told him they were required to produce a certain number of heads within a given time; but, moved by the agony of his parental love, they agreed to spare one of the youths, and pressed him to say, without loss of time, which it should be. The unfortunate father burst into tears, as he looked alternately at each; but, whilst he was hesitating between them, the impatient barbarians spared him the misery of a choice, and stabbed them both.

Theodosius was not at Milan at the time that Ambrose was made acquainted with this afflicting transaction; but he was expected to return a few days afterwards, and Ambrose quitted it, and went to Bologna for a time, in order to avoid an interview, until the emperor should have had time to reflect upon the enormity of his offence. He wrote to him, however, in the interim, to represent it to him; and his letter on the occasion, worthy of a faithful and zealous Christian pastor, is preserved in his works.

Shortly afterwards Ambrose returned to Milan. The emperor went to church, according to his usual custom; but Ambrose met him in the vestibule, and would not permit him to cross the sacred threshold. The monarch sought to excuse himself by the example of David, who had sinned, and was restored to the favour of the Almighty. “ You have

imitated him in his sin," Ambrose replied, "imitate him in his repentance." Theodosius humbled himself at these words, and submitted to the canonical penance dictated to him. He withdrew to his own palace, and remained eight months without presenting himself at church, earnestly occupied in prayer and religious exercises, previous to his making a public profession of penitence: nor would Ambrose even then admit him to absolution, till he had prevailed on him to pass a law, which ordained that the execution of all decrees touching the life of citizens, or the confiscation of their goods, should be delayed until the expiration of the thirtieth day after its promulgation; a most admirable safeguard to the people against the fatal consequences of irritability of temperament in their rulers, or the artifices of evil councillors. Had thirty days elapsed between the order of Theodosius and its execution, the inhabitants of Thessalonica would have been spared.

Theodosius, too happy to be admitted again into the pale of the Church, willingly submitted to the conditions Ambrose prescribed to him: as soon as he crossed the sacred threshold, he laid aside his imperial robes, and prostrating himself on the earth, watered it with his tears, repeating, as he struck his breast, the words of David, "*My soul cleaveth to the dust, quicken thou me according to thy word.*" All the people melted into tears at the sight, and lifted up their voices in prayer with their emperor, and with Ambrose, who was himself affected, even above the

rest. What a picture does this scene bring before the eyes! If we go back in imagination to the time of Theodosius, if we reflect that at that epoch, sovereignty, equally despotic and military in its nature, rarely deigned to act but by the sword alone, we must hold up in veneration the memory of the virtuous pontiff, who, thus daring to raise his single voice amidst an enslaved world, had the courage to forbid the entry of the church, to a monarch covered with the blood of his subjects, until he had purified himself by repentance.

Theodosius after this returned into the East, and Valentinian found himself in sole and undisputed possession of the West; but the counsels of Ambrose failed to save the young emperor from the treachery of Arbogastus, who assassinated him, and raised the feeble Eugenius to his place. Ambrose, faithful to the memory of Valentinian, whom he had held an infant in his arms, poured out his eloquent regrets over his tomb; and Theodosius speedily revenged his death by deposing Eugenius, and uniting the eastern and western empires under his own government.

It was at this high degree of glory that Theodosius the Great, thus a second time the liberator of Italy, died at Milan. Ambrose did not long survive this excellent prince, whom he had loved, because, to use his own words, "he sought reprimands rather than flatteries." He died on the 4th of April, 397, in the fifty-seventh year of his age, and was buried under the altar of the church, called afterwards from him

the Ambrosian, having been Archbishop of the city twenty-two years and four months.

Ambrose has been called the Christian Plato, from the circumstance, as is related, of a swarm of bees settling on his lips whilst he lay in his cradle; and the mellifluous sweetness of his language, joined to the purity of his thoughts, will fully bear him out in the comparison. Like St. Gregory of Nazianzum, he sought to instruct by poetry as well as prose; and his hymns became so celebrated, that in succeeding ages the name given to sacred songs of that description was "Ambrosians." It was, as we have already stated, he who introduced into the Church at Milan, the custom, which thence extended itself throughout the West, of alternate chanting in the psalms, that had been practised some time before, with great benefit to the devotion of the people in the East. His own compositions of this kind are distinguished by a noble and touching simplicity, and sometimes by a grandeur worthy of their subjects, as in the glorious *TE DEUM LAUDAMUS*, which, as it is said, he and St. Augustine, in the transports of a sublime piety, poured forth unpremeditatedly, in alternate verses, immediately after Augustine had received baptism at the hands of Ambrose; whose eloquence and piety had a great share, under the grace and blessing of God, of bringing that glorious luminary of his age into the Church he was destined so powerfully to enlighten and adorn.

The works of St. Ambrose may be divided into



four classes—his “Commentaries on the Scriptures,” his “Dissertations, Moral and Theological;” his “Funeral Orations,” and his “Letters.” Of the latter, unfortunately, the chief part are lost; a loss the more to be regretted, as is well observed by the Benedictines in speaking of it, as the letters of great men are in general their most precious monuments: in which they paint themselves from the life, and show us not only the characteristics of their genius, but also all the features of their private virtues. Among his Commentaries on the Scriptures, those on the Psalms, which occupied him assiduously for seven months, may be considered as the most replete with practical instruction, and perhaps the finest of his works. He eminently combined the art of pleasing with the talent of instructing. He was accustomed to complain that he had been elected a bishop before he was acquainted with ecclesiastical matters; but his zeal and application soon made up for his deficiencies. St. Augustine relates of him, that he was rarely to be seen without a book in his hand. Origen, Hippolitus, Didymus the blind, and, above all, St. Basil, were, after the Holy Scriptures, his favourite sources of instruction; and his humility was such, that he always submitted his writings to the opinions of his friends, before he gave them to the world, begging their sincere and earnest criticism. “Make notes,” says he, in a letter to Sabrinus, Bishop of Plaisance, “on the least word that may appear doubtful, or incorrect, that

the enemies of the truth may not twist it in favour of their sentiments." His "Treatise on Offices" is written in imitation of Cicero, with the laudable design of showing the superiority of the Christian religion over Pagan ethics; and though deficient in plan, abounds with things of solid utility. His "Directions to his Clergy," says Milner, "deserve to be made a part of an episcopal charge in every age of the Church;" and the same writer says, whilst reprehending his too great advocating of monastic life, and other failings rather of the judgment than the heart, "but the lover of godliness will be disposed to forget his errors and superstitions, faults of the times rather than of his disposition, and will remember only the fervent, the humble, the laborious, and the charitable Bishop of Milan."

## SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS

### SAINT AMBROSE.

#### ADVICE TO THE CLERGY.

IT becomes the prudence and gravity of clergymen, to avoid the public banquets frequently made for strangers : you may exercise hospitality to them at your own houses, and by this caution, there will be no room for reproach. Entertainments of this sort take up much time, and also evidence a fondness for feasting. Secular and voluptuous discourse is apt to creep in ; to shut your ears against it is impossible ; to forbid it will be looked on as imperious. Why do you not employ the time that is free from clerical duties in reading ? Why do you not visit Christ, speak to Christ, hear Christ ? We speak to him, when we pray ; we hear him, when we read the divine oracles. What have we to do with other men's houses ? Let them rather come to us who want us. What have we to do with idle chit-chat ? we received the ministry to attend on the service of Christ, not to pay court to men.

*Treatise on Offices, 20.*

#### DIFFICULTIES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

I WISH a serious and earnest affection for the things of God were as easy to be attained as it is easy to speak of it ; but the enticement of earthly lusts frequently creeps in,

and the diffusion of vanity fills the mind. To avoid these snares is difficult, to be divested of them impossible; in fine, that the thing is rather matter of desire than effect, the prophet confesses, in saying, "*Incline my heart to Thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.*" Our heart is not in our own power; our thoughts, by sudden incursions, confound the mind, and draw it a different way from what we have determined. Who so happy as always to mount upwards in his heart? How can this be done without divine aid? Blessed is the man, O Lord, whose strength is in Thee!

*On the Flight of Time, c. 1.*

#### DUTY TO PARENTS AND KINDRED.

MINISTER to the wants of those to whom you owe your existence. Whatever you may do for your mother, you can never acquit yourself of the debt you owe her, for all the pain and anguish you have caused her; you can never pay back to her the anxiety she felt for you, even before you saw the light; the tender-care she lavished on you whilst she yet nourished you on her bosom. How little can you offer her in return for the privations to which she voluntarily condemned herself for your sake; how often has she waked that you might sleep; how often has she bathed your cradle with her tears! Is it possible that you can have hardness of heart enough to leave her in indigence? O my son, what judgment will you not also draw down upon yourself, should you fail in your duty to your father, to whom you are indebted for all you have, since to him you are indebted for every thing that you are! What disgrace will not recoil on your own head, if you should allow the Church to forestall you in this duty! You will, perhaps, say, "I had rather give my money to the Church, than to my family;" but God will not accept gifts of those who

leave their parents to die of want. The order of God is, that you provide for your parents and relations before any other poor; for if, according to the Divine law, any injury done to a father is deserving of the punishment of death, how much more so is the crime of leaving him a prey to hunger—more cruel in its sufferings than death itself! We continually see persons who, to gain the vain applause of men, give to the Church what they withhold from their relations—ostentatious hypocrites, whom God disowns. True compassion begins with deeds of kindness towards relatives and neighbours. Give first to them, then to the indigent stranger, and afterwards, from your superfluity, to the minister of the altar, in order that you may receive from him the spiritual good of which you may stand in need; for, in receiving from you, he gives you again; he does not receive as a poor person, who has nothing wherewith to pay back, but as a rich man, who can return you your own, with interest.

*Discourse on Luke.*

#### EQUALITY OF CONDITION DESIRABLE IN MARRIAGE.

IT is less the beauty of a woman than her virtue, and the propriety of her conduct, that secure her the heart of her husband. He, then, who intends to engage himself in marriage, ought, in order to enjoy all the sweets of it, to seek a woman not richer or more highly connected than himself. Superiority of rank or fortune on the side of a wife, too often engenders a pride that does not willingly stoop itself to the duties incumbent on marriage. Prefer her who is contented to shine in her good works, rather than by the splendour of her jewels. The husband, on his side, does not easily submit to the haughtiness of a woman who cannot forget that she is his superior in condition. Sarah was not richer, or nobler than Abraham; there was no disproportion between

them, she loved him as her equal ; and as there were neither possessions nor connexions to retain her in the place of her birth, she was at liberty to accompany her husband whithersoever he might wish her to go.

*Discourse on Abraham.*

#### FRIENDSHIP.

FRIENDSHIP is in general better understood among the poor than the rich. The rich flatter one another; the poor are flattered by none; for there is nothing to be gained or feared from them. The rich persuade themselves too easily that every thing that is done for them is on account of their condition or merit, and that those who oblige them, do so because they expect some greater service from them in return; the poor have nothing to offer in proof of their gratitude but their blessings; it is to God himself that they refer us for our recompense.

*Treatise on Offices, b. II.*

#### THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM.

WE shall go where Jesus has prepared mansions for his servants, that where he is, there we may be also. The will of Christ is the same as performance. That we may know his true will, he hath said, "*Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory.*" We follow thee, Lord Jesus, but draw us that we may follow; no one rises without thee; open to us thy good, which David desired to see, when he said, "*I believe verily to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.*" Show us that good, which in its nature is unchangeable; and which, when we arrive at heaven, we shall never cease to acknowledge and approve. There thy saints are freed from errors and anxieties, from folly and ignorance, from fear and terror; from all lusts and carnal affections. Let us seek him, and embrace his feet, and

worship him, that he may say to us, "*Fear not, I am the remission of sins, I am the light, I am the life : he that cometh to me shall not see death,*" because he is the fulness of divinity.

*Discourses.*

#### HUMAN FRAILTY.

PROVIDENCE permits holy persons to fall sometimes into grievous faults. As it proposes them to us for examples, it wills that the same temptations should occur to them as to ourselves; in order that we may be instructed by their penitence, as well as by their purity and sanctity. They themselves are also thus taught that they have no good in their own nature, independent of the Divine Grace; and that without its assistance, it is impossible for them to attain salvation. If we saw them always walk with a firm and even step, in the rough and slippery paths of the world, we should make ourselves believe that they were of a nature superior to our own; and consequently exempt from the weaknesses of humanity, an error which would speedily lead us into the persuasion that it would be useless to attempt to imitate them. But when I read the account of their faults, I conclude that, as they partake of my infirmities, so may I attain to their virtues.

David sinned,—it is what kings are in the habit of doing; David repented of his sin, and wept and groaned over it,—this is what kings are *not* in the habit of doing. David sinned because he was a man: he humbled himself before the God whom he had offended, because he was a converted man. The just are not more perfect in their nature, but more submissive; they are not invulnerable to the allurements of vice, but they abhor the principles of it.

*Apology for King David.*

## HUMAN GLORY.

HUMAN glory is a mere outward brilliancy, of no value in itself, and only valued by us in proportion to the trouble we have in acquiring it, or the afflictions to which we expose others, in doing so.

*On Naboth.*

## PARENTAL PARTIALITIES REPREHENDED.

THE blind predilections of parents sow seeds of discord among their children, which may eventually arm their hands with parricidal steel. Parental tenderness ought to be meted out with the same measure to all. There may be more affection nourished at the bottom of the heart for one than for the rest, because he is more affectionate, or that he resembles his father or his mother more, or for any other cause; but the same outward rule of justice should be scrupulously observed towards all. The best way you can serve the child you most love, is to secure him the affection of his brothers: you deprive him of more than you can give him, if you draw down upon him the envy which unjust preferences are certain to inspire.

There may be a laudable rivalry between parents, by which the affections of their children shall be equally divided between them: let the mother distribute her attentions, the father his counsels, among them; let the mother lavish her tender caresses upon the youngest, the father bestow upon the eldest those more serious thoughts to which his birthright entitles him. Let the mother inspire most love, the father most deference: but let the regard shown to each be equal, that it may maintain concord among all; lest what is given to one may be an injustice to another; and let whatever is given to one be accompanied by an indemnification to the other.



It is sweet to love our children ; delightful to love them with tenderness : but it too often happens that the love we bear them, when not confined within reasonable bounds, becomes an evil to them ; if by an excess of indulgence we abandon them to their own caprices, or by an exclusive partiality for one, rob the others of the affection which is due to them, and destroy in their hearts the love they ought to feel for each other.

The most precious treasure that parents can lay up for their children is, mutual attachment. It is the richest inheritance they can leave them. Far, then, from showing a predilection in favour of one, at the expense of the rest, let all, on the contrary, who share in the same nature, share in the same advantages. A little less money is no object of consideration, compared to the gain of domestic union and harmony.

*On the Patriarch Joseph.*

#### REFLECTIONS ON THE DUTIES OF A MINISTER.

THE Lord Jesus knows how to support the weak, and to bring with himself the fountain of living water. He came to the grave himself. Oh, that thou wouldest come to this, my sepulchre of corruption, Lord Jesus, and wash me with thy tears ! If thou weep for me, I shall be saved. Thou shalt call me from the grave of this body, and say, Come forth, that my thoughts may go forth to Christ and call forth thy servant. Though, bound with the chain of my sins, I am entangled hand and foot, and buried in dead works, at thy call I shall come forth free, and be found one of those who sit at thy table. It shall be said, Behold, a man, taken from the midst of secular vanity, remains in the priesthood, not by his own strength, but by the grace of Christ. Preserve, Lord, thy own gift. I know myself unworthy of the episcopal office, because I had given myself

to this world ; but, by thy grace, I am what I am. The least of all bishops : yet, because I have undertaken some labour for thy Church, preserve this fruit, lest him whom, when lost, thou hast called to the ministry, thou shouldest suffer to perish in that ministry. And particularly, grant me the spirit of sympathizing with sinners ; that I may not proudly chide, but lament and weep ; that while I deplore another, I may mourn over myself, saying, “ *Tamar is more righteous than I.*” Perhaps a young person may have sinned, deceived and hurried on into folly ; we old persons sin also. The law of the flesh rebels against the law of our mind, even in us, whose duty it is to teach. “ *Tamar is more righteous than I.*” We blame the avarice of another ; let us remember whether our conduct has not been stained with the same vice, which secretly dwells in our corrupt nature, and let each of us say, “ *Tamar is more righteous than I.*” The same may be said with respect to the vice of anger. This is the way to avoid the severity of that just rebuke of our Lord, concerning the mote and the beam. He who rejoices in another’s fall, rejoices in the devil’s victory. Let us rather grieve, when we hear that a man perishes, for whom Christ died. Let us repent, and hope for pardon by faith, not as an act of justice : God wants not our money, but our faith.

*On Penitence, b. II. ch. 8.*

#### RELIGION STRENGTHENED BY TRIALS.

TIMES of persecution have always been most fruitful in faith and good works. All affections were then turned towards God. The prayers of the faithful were then interrupted by no terrestrial things. Their continual meditations made them look with a tranquil mind upon the perils of the world, and sustained them in an habitual contempt of death. Since we have lost this holy exercise, those whom

labour could not subdue, have suffered themselves to be enervated by rest. Idleness and peace are then fatal to the Christian. It is during the calm of the Church that the most dangerous tempests are raised. The time of persecution leaves us no leisure to attend to the luxuries of the body, or to follow the dictates of the passions, which are only engendered in the bosom of abundance and prosperity ; but when we have only ourselves to contend against, we soon give up the struggle, sink, and yield.

*On the 119th Psalm.*

#### RICHES.

No one is rich who has desires he cannot gratify, or poor, who has not.

To give away a little out of a great deal, is not charity.

Riches are a hinderance to salvation, in those who make a bad use of them ; and a help to it in those who employ them well.

A great fortune engenders perplexities, a small one is sufficient for comfort. Do not imagine that the rich must necessarily be happy. You see what the rich man possesses ; you do not see what he wishes for.

There is always something of injustice and inhumanity in immense wealth, however legitimate, in point of law, the possession of it ; however honest, in the sight of man, the means by which it may have been acquired.

*Maxims.*

#### SIN.

OUR sins are our bitterest enemies. They trouble us in the bosom of peace, afflict us whilst we are in health, sadden us amidst our prosperity ; agitate us when all around us is serene, mingle bitterness with our joys, and awaken us when we sleep. We are, through them, convicted without accuser,

tortured without torturer, manacled and held fast in chains. They rise up, a host against us: and we pass from one to another, like a slave sold to many masters—he recovers not his liberty, under any of them—he only changes his yoke.

*On the 87th Psalm.*

#### ON TAKING OFFENCE.

IT is a common temptation to the human mind, that persons meeting with some slight offence in the path of duty, are inclined to depart from it. In ministers such conduct is peculiarly lamentable. Satan labours by this method, if he can by no other, to offend them. “What advantage is it to me,” they will perhaps say, “to remain in the pastoral office, to be laboriously employed, and ill-treated, as if I had no other way of getting my bread?”—What, then, are worldly ends the governing motive, and do you not mean to lay up in store for the world to come?—Say not of thy God, he is a hard master; say not of thy office, it is unprofitable. The devil envies thy hope. Depart not from the Lord’s inheritance, that he may at length bid thee enter into his joy. Farewell, my sons, and serve the Lord; for he is a good master.

*Epistle to his Clergy.*

#### TEARS.

PETER wept because he had sinned. We weep because we have not been able to sin; disappointed in the attainment of our depraved wishes.

Peter could relieve his contrition by tears, because he loved the master whom he had denied;—but Judas found none wherewith to expiate his crime, because he was only sensible of the remorse of an avenging conscience, which becomes its own accuser.

*On Luke.*

## WORSHIP OF GOD.

*“THE Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silent before Him.”* Why was it that we first raised temples to the God of heaven? Was it to listen to His praises in them, to offer up our prayers to Him? this duty could every where have been fulfilled. Your own house is a sanctuary wherein you can pray: your own heart the altar on which you can sacrifice. Was it simply to recall to us the idea and remembrance of a Supreme Being? All nature, all His works, celebrate His glory. The universe is His temple, and man the priest. If man had not been ungrateful and rebellious, the sight of so many wonders would have been sufficient to keep his duty towards his God always before his eyes. Aurora each morning commencing her brilliant career; the ever-flowing streams coursing down the mountains, and meandering through the plains; the azure firmament, the enamelled meadows; the treasures of the harvest: every thing, from the superb cedar to the smallest, lowliest shrub of the valleys; from the eagle, that bursts through the clouds, to the insect that travels upon the earth,—all would have proved a source to man of continual praise and adoration. But he, becoming insensible to these ever-renewing miracles, plunged into the sleep of indifference in the midst of so many wonders, the very stars, even, ceasing to convince him of the glory of their Author. Art was added to Nature; for the name of God being effaced from the breast of his noblest work, was obliged to be engraven on the entablature of temples built with hands,—every day, every moment, hymns and canticles are publicly chanted to recal man, in spite of himself, to the worship of the Almighty; to reanimate his sense of benefits, and put his ingratitude to the blush. To proclaim the glory of God, to acknowledge it, to attest it in his earthly temples: this ought to be the desire of every one, the intention of all men, the end of religion.

*On the 119th Psalm.*

## SAINT JEROME.

*PRESBYTER OF THE CHURCH.*

BORN, 331 ; DIED, 420.

THERE is scarcely a name in the history of the Early Christian Church that speaks more powerfully to the imagination than that of Jerome. Yet it is from no association with it of outward dignity, or public events : simply a presbyter of the Church, he never would accept any honour in the Ecclesiastical State, and no opportunity of distinguishing himself in civil matters occurred in the few events which marked his solitary life.

Jerome was born at Stridon, on the confines of Dalmatia and Pannonia, about the year 331. To the wildness and barbarity of the scenes around him, rendered still more wild and barbarous by the perpetual ravages of the Goths, he has, in a curious contemplation of his own peculiarities, such as it is the delight and misfortune of sensibility to indulge in, attributed the impetuosity of his character. Nevertheless, whatever there might be of savageness in the objects with which his early associations were connected, he had the blessing of Christian parents, in opulent circumstances, who were suffi-

ciently enlightened to wish him to receive all the advantages that a careful and liberal education could secure to him. He was, therefore, sent when very young to Rome to study the Greek and Latin tongues, and make himself acquainted with the learning of the schools; even at that early age he showed the susceptibility to solemn and serious impressions, which so entirely influenced his maturer years. "When I was a boy," says he, in a letter to a friend, "studying the liberal arts at Rome, I was wont to make a round, on the Sabbath, with others of the same age and inclinations, to visit the tombs of the apostles and martyrs, and often to descend into the caves, which are dug deep into the earth, and have for walls on each side the bodies of those who are interred there." Among his masters, he mentions with much esteem Victorin, a celebrated professor of rhetoric, and equally distinguished by his remarkable conversion, and subsequent attachment to Christianity; also the grammarian Donatus, whose commentaries on Terence and Virgil have given reputation to his name even in later times.

From the first of his arrival at Rome, Jerome plunged himself into study with all the natural ardour of his temperament; but the same heat of fancy that made him luxuriate in the voluptuous imagery of the Greek poets, more as one of themselves than as a rugged Dalmatian, hurried him into the grosser realities of the pleasures which, in their abstract consideration, had delighted his imagination,

without injuring the purity of his morals; not so when embodied in the world. Spectacles, society, vices disguised in forms of loveliness,—all insensibly captivated his senses, and might have proved equally destructive to his principles and his happiness; but, fortunately for both, the very sensibility which hurried him towards vice, so long as she was hidden under the mask of beauty, repelled him from her fancied allurements, as soon as she displayed them in her native boldness: equally dreading the temptations that surrounded him, and disgusted with the void which his forcible estrangement of himself from them left in his breast, he sought to fix his wavering principles, and raise his affections from earthly things, by reviving in his soul the lofty aspirations he had nursed in his solitary moments. But to effect this, it seemed to him that he ought to be solitary again; and after arming himself with the seal of baptism, he set off to travel alone. Bent upon turning all his pursuits to the benefit of his religious improvement, he went into Gaul, to make researches among the books in the possession of the Christian bishops in that country. He there cultivated a particular intimacy with Rufinus, a priest of the Church of Aquila, whose name subsequently became but too closely associated with his own in the bitterness of controversy.

Having, in the course of his journey, added largely to his stock of information, and, as he hoped, broken himself of his propensity to worldly pleasures, Jerome



returned to Rome, and began to exercise his talents in the cause of the Church, by refuting the contradictions, in doctrine, and the errors of ancient traditions, with which she was now tried, in place of the persecutions and martyrdoms of earlier times. His fervid imagination, and impassioned eloquence made a powerful impression on all who heard him, but more especially on the female portion of his auditors. Many Roman ladies of high birth submitted themselves implicitly to his guidance, and his letters extended his influence to such distant quarters as his discourses could not reach. This, however, was dangerous ground for a man to tread, who had only so recently learned to distrust himself, and there were many around him more ready to anticipate his sliding, than to hold him up in his path. He saw the perils to which he was again exposed on every side, and again he sought refuge from them in flight. He went into Asia, and gazed with eager eyes on the celebrated cities of Antioch, Smyrna, and Constantinople: he sought the counsels of Gregory Nazianzen, whose poetic temperament responded to his own. He searched the libraries, plunged deep into the literature of the East, and, at length, disgusted with finding there the same vices and the same discords as he had quitted in the West, he fled the haunts of man, and secluded himself in a desert, on the confines of Syria.

“You ask me why I seek the deserts?” says he to Vigilantius; “I answer, in order that I may avoid

temptations and combats. 'Why not rather,' you will perhaps reply, 'remain on the field of battle, face the enemy, and win the crown that waits upon victory?—not to fight is to fly: it is the act of a coward.' I acknowledge it—I will not dissemble my weakness. I dare not fight in the hope of-victory, from the fear that I may one day be overcome. In flying, I am not called upon to resist: in remaining, I expose myself to the alternative of vanquishing, or being vanquished. Why relinquish a certainty for an uncertainty? When once engaged in the struggle, it is at least as possible to be conquered as to conquer. In taking the resolution to fly, I am certain not to be beaten, precisely because I have fled; and I fly only to make sure of not being beaten. Can any one go to sleep with a serpent close to him, and feel secure from harm?"

Such was the negative excellence which Christians, under the increasing influence of monastic life, now began to content themselves with aspiring to; instead of that active virtue by which alone the evils in ourselves can be seen, combated, and removed, and the good strengthened and purified.

Still Jerome had not the resolution to plunge all at once into that complete isolation which must throw him entirely on himself.

He was therefore glad to be accompanied into his retirement by three friends, Heliodorus (his best beloved), Innocent, and Evagrius. Unfortunately,

however, the last two died shortly after their arrival in the desert, unable to withstand the austerities to which they subjected themselves; and Heliodorus, bound by many ties of family affection to his home, had not the strength of mind to remain long away from it. He returned to Rome, but with a promise to his friend that he would rejoin him at a future period. This promise Jerome was not slow in reclaiming; and he called upon him to fulfil it in a style, most characteristic of his own disposition, alternately of severe reproach for what he conceived his apostasy, and of affectionate encouragement, to revive in him the resolutions he had formed, at a period when he foresaw no obstacles to their fulfilment.

“Have you forgotten,” says he, “the day when, enrolled under his standard, and buried to the world with Jesus Christ by baptism, you pledged your solemn oath to serve him, and to sacrifice father and mother for his sake, if it should be necessary so to do? The moment is come. The demon at the bottom of your heart is labouring to overthrow Jesus Christ. But whatever efforts he may make to triumph over your generous design,—whether in the form of a mother with dishevelled locks, her garments rent, and supplicating you with tears; or of a father prostrate at your feet, making a barrier of his body to prevent your departure,—overleap all, and go intrepidly forth to range yourself under

the banner of the cross. There is a sort of piety in being cruel in a case like this, and it is only in such cases we are permitted to be so. . . . .

“ I am not ignorant of the nature of the ties you have to break. I am far from being insensible to them,—far from carrying within my bosom a heart inaccessible to pity. I have had trials of this kind, as well as yourself. I know that you have a sister who, reduced to the solitude of widowhood, lavishes the tenderest caresses upon you. I know that you have domestics to whom you have been accustomed from infancy, who would ask you to what masters you were going to abandon them; old servants, also, bending under the weight of years; and a preceptor who, by his tender cares, has supplied the place of the father whom you had lost. I know they would surround you with the cry, ‘ Wait a little longer,—we have so short a time to live,—let us receive our sepulture from your hands.’ I know a desolated mother will seek to detain you, in the name of maternal tenderness, and of her silver hairs. I know every body will remind you that you are the sole support of your house: but ties like these have no power against the real love of God. . . . .

“ When, therefore, our faith is attacked by all these sentiments of piety and tenderness, we must oppose to them, as an impenetrable wall, the words of the Son of God,—‘ *Whoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.*’ ”

After an animated view of all the dangers and troubles of world, he continues:—"O tranquil deserts, sown by Jesus Christ with flowers! O happy solitude, where we may converse alone and familiarly with God. O my brother, what hast thou to do with the world? Thou who art so much above it, how long wilt thou remain within the shadow of houses? how long wilt thou shut thyself up in cities blackened with smoke? Believe me, every thing here appears in new and brighter light. Freed as I am from the oppression of the body, which seemed to bend me down to earth, I am able to direct my unimpeded and upward flight to pure and cloudless regions. What is it then that you apprehend? Poverty? but Jesus Christ calls the poor blessed. Labour? but where is the wrestler who dares to claim the prize till he has won it by a vigorous struggle? Are you anxious about the necessities of life? Faith is not afraid of hunger. Are you afraid of lying on the bare earth, and bruising your body, already weakened and exhausted by your long abstinence? Your Saviour will be with you at your side. Does the idea of the vast extent of these deserts terrify you? Refresh yourself in imagination by wandering in the flowery fields of Paradise.

. . . . But whatever may be the difficulties that arrest you in your path, remember that the apostle has replied to them all, simply by these words, *'for I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the*

*glory which shall be revealed in us.'"* . . . . .

The force of these arguments was acknowledged, but the object of them failed. Heliodorus remained in the world, and Jerome in the desert. To the credit of both, however, their friendship stood the shock of opposing feelings, and found a point of re-union in the young Nepotian, the orphan nephew of Heliodorus, the tie which still connected him with the busy world, and on whom Jerome lavished, from the bosom of his retirement, equal affection and equal care, through the medium of his letters and exhortations.

But, alas! disgust of the world is not, in itself, a preservative against the languor of solitude; and Jerome, revered for his piety, respected for his learning, consulted by the most distinguished characters of both sexes, alike in temporal and spiritual things, indefatigable in his studies and his devotions, firm in faith and strong in hope, Jerome still groaned in the desert, over the frailties of a nature which not all his austerities could utterly subdue. He reproached himself, as for sins of the first magnitude, with the pictures his imagination forced upon him, in solitude and darkness, of the pleasures which, from a sense of their guilt and insufficiency, he had voluntarily relinquished in the very prime of life. "How often," says he, retracing, many years afterwards, this trying period of his life,—“how often since I fixed my abode in these deserts, in this vast solitude, which, burnt up by the devouring heats,

presents to those who inhabit it only the wildest features, oh! how often, I may say, have I been transported in idea to Rome, and all its fascinations! Plunged in an abyss of bitterness, I have thrown myself on the floor of my solitary cell,—a coarse hair-cloth covered my hideous figure, my skin, dried and blackened in the sun, was like that of an Ethiopian, and my complexion as livid as a corpse. Thus I groaned and wept throughout the day; and if, during the night, sleep would sometimes close my eyelids, in spite of all my resistance, scarcely had I the strength to sustain my body, as I fell upon the naked earth. I say nothing of my food. In the deserts, even those who may be ill never permit themselves to drink any thing but water; and they would accuse themselves of a degree of sensuality, in taking any thing that might require the aid of fire in its preparation.” Alas! this same man, who, to avoid the torments of hell, condemned himself to a living death in this prison, where he had no other companions than ferocious and venomous beasts, how often was he in imagination transported amidst the dances of the Roman virgins! “Yes, with a visage pale with fasting, I retained a heart burning with desires. In this mortified body, in this flesh prematurely dead, only the fire of the passions remained; criminal remembrances, desires, regrets, all overwhelmed me; I walked up and down,—I wandered about,—I went, I came, not knowing where to seek refuge from myself, until at last I used

to throw myself at the foot of the cross, bathing it with my tears, which ran in rivers, and which I wiped away with my hair, and struggling by the severest austerities to subdue my rebel nature. I am not ashamed to confess the misery I endured; so far from it, I groan now to think that I am not what I was then. I well remember having frequently passed whole nights in uttering loud cries, and beating my breast, until the Lord himself dispersed the tempest that raged within me, and restored peace to my soul. Sometimes I shrunk even from my very cell, seeming to dread its walls, as the accomplices of my thoughts. Then I would penetrate the inmost recesses of the desert, or wander on the summits of the mountains, or hide myself in the obscurity of the valleys, or the cavities of the rocks—there I prayed, and wept, and mortified my criminal flesh; and more than once, as the Lord is my witness, I saw myself transported to the angelic choirs, and in the raptures of joy ineffable, I have exclaimed, as if from them, ‘*Because of the savour of thy ointments, thy name is as ointment, therefore do the virgins love thee.*’”—Cant. i. 2.

What a picture does this account exhibit to us of a man of genius, and of ardent temperament, incessantly condemned to fix his attention upon himself!

The controversies of Antioch afforded Jerome excuse to take refuge for a time among the haunts of men: he returned to that city, at the earnest solicitation of some of his friends, and was ordained priest, by Paulinus, the bishop; but, shrinking from the



responsibility of the office, he resumed, after a while, the austere freedom of the desert. He traversed the sandy plains of Syria and Judea, wandered among the ruins of the ancient cities of Israel, and finally fixed upon a cell in Bethlehem, the place of his early predilection, as his abode and tomb. Here he added to his already vast stores of erudition, by intense application to the Hebrew, which language he learned by the aid of a converted Jew, who, Nicodemus-like, visited him at night, for fear of giving umbrage to his brethren. “When my soul was on fire with evil thoughts,” says he, in a letter to Rusticus, “in order that I might subdue the flesh, I became scholar to a monk who had been a Jew, to learn of him the Hebrew alphabet. I, who had so diligently studied the judicious rules of Quintilian—the copious flowing eloquence of Cicero—the grand style of Fronto—and the smoothness of Pliny, I now had to inure myself to the hissing and broken-winded words of the Hebrew. What labour it cost me—what difficulties I went through—how often I despaired and left off—and how I began again to learn, both I myself, who felt the burden, and they also who lived with me, can witness! And I thank our Lord that I now gather sweet fruit from the bitter seed of those studies.” He at the same time laboured with indefatigable industry to make himself master of the Chaldee and the Syriac, although he had just before been complaining to Rufinus, that almost from his cradle he was worn out with the labour of learning

the Latin tongue. Sometimes he sought a few moments' relaxation in the cherished authors of Greece and Rome, the idols of his youth, the sole treasures he had brought with him into the East; he still found such inexpressible charms in these studies, that his Christian vigilance took alarm at the idea of preferring profane to sacred things; and he has drawn a lively picture of his struggles and self-accusation at this time, in a letter to Eustochium, the daughter of Paula, a Roman lady, still more illustrious by her virtues than by her descent from the line of Paulus, so celebrated in the history of her country.

“It is now many years,” says he, “that I quitted country, father, mother, sister, relatives, and, what it is sometimes difficult to detach one's self from, a splendid table and other luxuries, to which I had always been accustomed, with the intention of going to Jerusalem, to serve God there, and enrol myself in his holy army. The only worldly treasures I brought with me were the books that I had collected at Rome, with great labour and expense, and which I could not prevail upon myself to give up. Such, at that time, was my miserable state, and the excess of my passions, that I fasted rigidly, in order that I might, by this penance, seem to earn the privilege of reading Cicero. After frequent and intense vigils, after torrents of tears, drawn from me by the recollection of my early errors, I took up Plato; and when afterwards, calling home my thoughts, I

returned to the reading of the prophets—their style appeared to me rude and negligent. Blind that I was, I ventured to accuse the light!”

The conflicts of his mind at length threw him into a violent fever, which, to use his own words, penetrated to the very marrow of his bones, and allowed him no respite to his sufferings, day or night. During its paroxysms, he was tormented with visions that reproached him with the delight he took in his profane readings; and so powerful was the impression made on his mind by the severity of their warnings, that, when he recovered his consciousness, the first use he made of his returning reason was to abjure, for the rest of his life, the studies which had solaced its most trying moments. That which we have once brought ourselves to relinquish, is, we are always very ready to believe, falling into dis-esteem with others also;—and hence, some years afterwards, we find him speaking with great satisfaction of his once favourite writers being no longer the objects of universal admiration. “What man,” says he, in one of his letters to his esteemed Paula, “now reads Aristotle? How few are there who know the writings, or even the name of Plato! whilst our plain humble apostles, our fishers of men, are known and cited throughout the whole world.”

Jerome had visited Constantinople expressly to receive instructions from Gregory of Nazianzum on his method of explaining the Holy Scriptures; and it was this great task which he now resolved to make

the principal occupation of his future life. He had been invited to this labour by Pope Damasus; and perhaps there could not have been found at that time, in the whole range of the Christian world, another so capable of the herculean task. He had published a commentary on the prophet Obadiah in his youth; but this work bore many marks of inexperience, as he frankly owned in maturer age; regretting his indiscretion, in having given so uncooked a performance to the world: but now his judgment was ripened, his habits of inquiry and meditation confirmed, and his multifarious learning equal to whatever demands might be made upon it. It is almost solely to him that we are indebted for the version of the Holy Scriptures styled the Vulgate. Before his time a bad translation of the Septuagint, known by the name of Italic, was chiefly in use, and the Septuagint itself, being multiplied into as many copies as there were Christian provinces in need of them, was exceedingly corrupted in its text, owing to the ignorance and mistakes of transcribers. Jerome not only corrected these errors, but, profoundly versed in the knowledge of the sacred tongue, also reformed the Greek text after the Hebrew, and gave a new version of all the books received as canonical, adding to them those of Judith and Tobit.

There were as many variations in the Latin translations of the New Testament, as in the Greek of the Old. Jerome applied himself with equal assiduity to the correction of one as of the other;

he added prefaces, commentaries, and dissertations, illustrative of the historical and doctrinal points, and embodied in them a great portion of the immense correspondence which the reputation of his labours drew upon him, from all parts, on subjects connected with the Scriptures. Equally versed in polite literature, as in the profound study of ancient times, he may be justly considered among the Latins what Origen is among the Greeks; there was not a writer of Greece or Rome with whom he was not familiar: his intimate acquaintance with their beauties sometimes led him into a pomp of erudition, and a profuseness of citations, which have been deemed faults in his compositions, critically considered, but which are willingly pardoned by the reader, in consideration of the general justness of their application. The driest questions became interesting under his manner of treating them; the vehemence, the impetuosity with which he wrote, never injured the solidity of his reasoning, and his style, like his own character, in shaking off restraint, only became more powerful and more exalted. Nevertheless it must be acknowledged, that the same peculiarities of style and character were exhibited sometimes, in the course of his long life, in a light from which his friends turned their eyes away in sorrow, whilst his enemies rejoiced to fix attention on them; so true it is, that the errors of the good are the triumphs of the bad.

Among the instances of the bitterness of his

reproofs, and the impetuosity of his resentments, must be mentioned more particularly his controversy with Rufinus, priest of the church of Aquila, and long his most intimate friend, as we have already remarked ; but who, embracing some of the paradoxical opinions of Origen, was treated by Jerome, ever afterwards, in his zeal for the truth, with a severity which, if he had only had private wrongs to complain of from him, he certainly would not have manifested.

It is melancholy to contemplate the dangers and vicissitudes to which human affections are subject ; how lively a picture of attachment is conveyed by Jerome, in the following letter to Rufinus, on hearing that he had arrived in Egypt ! how contrary to the sentiments expressed in it, his subsequent conduct !

“The Holy Books declare to us that God often grants us more than we ask for ; and that he has felicities in store for us, that the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. I know it now, my dear Rufinus, from my own personal experience. For I, who accused myself of a sort of temerity, even whilst I bounded my wishes to a correspondence with you, simply by letters, by which I might, at least in idea, have the pleasure of conversing with you, I have now the joy of hearing that you are come into the deserts of Egypt, to visit the communities of saints who live in them, and whose virtues retrace upon earth the purity of celestial spirits. Oh ! if, by the special favour of our Lord Jesus Christ, I could now

be transported to you, as was formerly Philip to the Eunuch of Candace, or the Prophet Habakkuk to Daniel, with what ardour would I press you in my arms! But as I am not deserving of a similar miracle being performed for me, and as my health, moreover, which even in its best state is always weak and languishing, is now entirely ruined by my frequent illnesses, I send you this letter, instead of myself, as a chain woven by the hands of love to draw you hither.

“ Our brother Heliodorus was the first to announce the happy tidings to me, which I desired more than I hoped; especially as he told me he only knew it by hearsay, and it appeared too extraordinary for me to believe. I was thus divided between hope and fear, when it was confirmed to me by one who said that he knew it for a fact. This was a Solitary from Alexandria, whom the people of that city had sent into Egypt, with alms to the holy confessors here, who are indeed martyrs, from the willingness they have to suffer as such. Still I did not know what to think, for this man neither knew what country you belonged to, nor what was your name. At last, however, I was set at ease on the subject, by the concurring testimonies of a number of witnesses, who have left me no longer in doubt respecting your arrival in Egypt; all of them assuring me that Rufinus himself was in the desert of Nitria, and that he had gone there to visit the venerable Macarius. Thus all my uncertainty has vanished, but I only

now regret the more being so ill at this time. . . . I have suffered every imaginable trouble in my solitude in Syria. I have lost, as I may say, one of my two eyes. My friend Innocent, to whom I was attached, as to a part of myself, has been taken from me by a violent fever. There now only remains to me my dear Evagrius, from whom alone I borrow all my light, and whose affliction is increased by my continual infirmities.

“Your dear friend Bonosus, or rather mine, or, to speak more truly, our mutual friend, is now ascending to heaven by that mysterious ladder which Jacob saw in his dream. He bears his cross without thinking of the morrow, or casting a look behind. He sows in tears, to reap in joy; and lifts up, in his retreat, the same mystic serpent which Moses lifted up in the desert. After so fine an example of virtue, not imaginary but real, the Greeks and Romans may talk to us as they will, of their chimerical heroes. We see a young man brought up with us, in the knowledge of the fine arts, and distinguished among his equals by his rank and wealth,—we see him leave his mother, his sisters, and a brother, whom he tenderly loved, to seclude himself in a desert island, bordered with frightful rocks, and surrounded on all sides by roaring waves. Yet he makes a paradise to himself of this horrible solitude. It is there that, alone,—if he can be said to be alone who has Jesus Christ for his companion,—he contemplates that glory of God, which the apostles themselves could only see in a spot solitary, and apart from men. His body is



covered with a coarse hair-cloth, but it is a dress in which he will not be ashamed to meet his Saviour. The water of clear fountains is unknown to him, but he can quench his thirst in the living streams which flowed from the side of the Redeemer.

“Cast your eyes a moment, my dear Rufinus, upon this desert; imagine to yourself all its horrors; you can better appreciate the merit of the victory, when you understand the rudeness of the conflict. No verdure is ever seen on the naked barren soil, and in vain may shade be sought in the scorched up country; there are no trees to afford any. On all sides nothing is to be seen, but pointed rocks which form a kind of prison. Among them it is that Bonosus, serene, intrepid, armed with the spiritual weapons of which the apostle speaks, at one time listens to God in his Holy Word; at another, holds converse with Him in fervent prayer: and who can say that he may not see, shut up in his island, in part what it was given to John to see in the isle of Patmos?”

Is it not grievous to find this very same Rufinus, whose approach had filled the soul of Jerome with such fervent joy, when the glad tidings of it had penetrated into the solitude of his cell, thus spoken of by him, a few short years afterwards, when taken from the world, in the very midst of the controversy which had dissolved their long-standing friendship.

“The hydra-headed monster has at length ceased to hiss, and the scorpion lies beneath the earth, in Sicily, with Enceladus and Porphyrus.”

Rufinus conducted himself in this sorrowful controversy with much more moderation of expression; nevertheless, he condescended to turn his intimate knowledge of the tastes of his former friend, tastes which they had often delighted to pursue together, into accusations against him, no way consistent with the praises he elsewhere had affected to bestow upon his works.

“I can cite as my witness,” says he, “many religious, who, in their cells upon the Mount of Olives, have copied Cicero’s Dialogues for him. I have held the sheets in my hands; I have read them. He cannot deny, that when he came from Bethlehem to Jerusalem to see me, he brought one of Cicero’s Dialogues with him, and that, in his Greek paganism, he gave me a volume of Plato. But why should I waste time in proving what every body knows? Jerome, not long ago, was occupied in a criticism on profane literature, in the monastery of Bethlehem, and was explaining his dear Virgil, and the lyric, comic, and historic writers, to the children that were confided to him, to be taught the fear of the Lord.”

Such are the miserable recriminations to which even enlightened men will condescend, when their self-love is touched. How trifling appear the causes of these differences to after-ages; how deeply, at the time, do they injure the immortal part of those engaged in them! How seriously, then, does it become the duty of every Christian, on such occa-

sions, to act as a peace-maker, as far as may be in his power, and prevent the evil consequences that arise to religion, when its professors carry on their disputes in a strain which shows that there is a spirit within them that they know not of. What an example of charity and love does the conduct of St. Augustine afford, in this controversy between persons, both of whom he esteemed. Avoiding to take part with either, he laboured to prevent them injuring each other and themselves; and it is in this spirit of charity that he replies to Jerome, who had sent him his "Apology against Rufinus."

"I know nothing of the defamatory libels which you say have been circulated throughout Africa, respecting you. I have not seen any of them; but I have received your answer to them, which you have done me the favour to send me. I have read it, and read it with the grief of seeing two persons formerly so united, and whose friendship was celebrated in all the Churches throughout the world, now at determined enmity with each other. I acknowledge that in your writing you endeavour to observe moderation, and that you do not allow yourself to say all that your inclination might prompt; nevertheless, I could not but feel my heart smitten with grief and alarm, as I read. What would it have been, then, had I also read what your antagonist may have written against you. '*Woe to the world because of offences.*' Behold the fulfilment of what the Truth has predicted to us, that the charity of many should

wax cold, because of the abundance of iniquity. Where, after this, shall we find hearts that will venture to open affectionately and confidingly, one to another? Where will be the friends who will venture to pour into each other's bosoms their most secret thoughts, without any fear of those thoughts being one day revealed, as by an enemy; since we live to see and weep over such a misfortune reaching Jerome and Rufinus? O miserable condition of humanity! O what foundation have we for building upon what we may see in the heart of our most intimate friends, when we know so little what they may prove to us in the end! But to be ignorant of what others may become, would be of little consequence to us, could we guard against the changes that may take place in ourselves. We may know, indeed, with some degree of certainty, what we are at the present moment, but who can know what he may become in the course of time? . . . . I am not a little consoled when I think of the reciprocal desire we have to see each other, even though it remain only a desire, and cannot be carried into effect. But even whilst I am indulging this thought, I feel my grief awakened afresh, at the recollection that you and Rufinus have been all that we wish to be; and that after having been nourished together so many years, on the honey of the Holy Scripture, you are now full of gall towards each other, and entirely estranged; who, after this, can help fearing that the same thing may happen to

himself? At what time, or in what place, can he feel himself secure from such a grief, since he has seen it befall both of you, in the full maturity of your age; at a time when you had both, having so long renounced all the agitations of the world, attached yourselves to the Lord with entire devotedness; sustaining yourselves on His Word, in that blessed land where He lived, and where He said to His disciples, '*I give you my peace; my peace I leave unto you.*' . . . . . If I could only meet you both in the same spot, I would throw myself at your feet, in the transport of my grief and my apprehensions. I would bathe them with my tears, and with all the tenderness and charity I have for you both, I would conjure you by what you owe to each other, and by what you owe to all the faithful, and particularly to the weak, to whom Jesus Christ is dead, and to whom you are now affording, on the stage of this life, so terrible and pernicious a spectacle: I would, I say, conjure you not to spread abroad those writings against each other, which, once out of your hands, neither of you will be able to recall; and which will in themselves operate as a perpetual obstacle to your reconciliation; or at least as a leaven, that you would not either of you dare to touch, even though you might be reconciled, and which would be a means, on the most trifling occasions, of imbittering your recollections, and renewing the war between you."

Let us, however, draw a veil over human imper-

fections, counterbalanced as they were, in the venerable Jerome, by transcendent virtues and a long life of self-denial, based on the most conscientious, though they might be mistaken views. Let us then accept at once the acknowledgement of his faults, and the excuse which he made for them in his old age, with affecting simplicity, in the words, -

*“ Per iram multum peccavi quia Dalmata fui.”*

I have sinned much in giving way to anger, being a Dalmatian.

In 382, Jerome was summoned to attend a council, convened in Rome, by Pope Damasus, to regulate the debates relative to the election of Flavian, bishop of that city. He accordingly went thither, accompanied by the celebrated Epiphanius, at that time Bishop of Cyprus. It was now that Jerome re-appeared in Rome, with all the saintly dignity of long-trying virtue, in the maturity of age, the full vigour of his genius, and invested with the reputation of the extensive labour he was engaged in upon the Sacred Writings. Continually consulted on questions of the faith, his decisions became more influential than ever; and over the minds of the female sex in particular, he reigned with a power that might have been termed despotic, so far as the implicit obedience of his subjects was concerned, had it not been exercised with a tenderness of zeal, that gave it more of a parental than a priestly character. Many Roman ladies, whom in early life he had detached from the pride and pomp of their elevated rank, he still found

engaged in the practice of the virtues the Gospel taught them, and continuing them, by their example, to their children. It was impossible for a man devoted and enthusiastic as himself, to see, without transports of gratitude and admiration, the heiresses of the noblest names of Rome in her

“ High and palmy state,”

the daughters of the Scipios, the Marcelluses, the Camilluses, of the mistress of the world, thus, rescued from the idolatries of their ancestors, devoting themselves to good works, and gladly sacrificing their youth, their beauty, and their wealth, to the relief of the poor and the afflicted ; as if Providence was willing to draw forth the meekest consolations of humanity, from the bosom of those very families, whose overweening haughtiness and luxury had before oppressed the world.

It was to Fabiola, of the house of Fabius, that, under the direction of St. Jerome, Rome was indebted for its first hospitals ; endowing them with her immense wealth, and devoting all her time to a personal attendance on the sick and destitute, admitted into them, she gave the astonished Pagans the example of virtues they had not even thought of, and for which they would have gladly accounted, by supposing some of the imaginary attributes of their own divinities connected with them.

The ascendancy of Jerome was not seen by the priesthood of Rome without considerable jealousy,

and the fearlessness with which he attacked the vices that had already begun to mingle with their functions, increased their resentments against him. Speaking of the avarice of the clergy, he says, "Is it not a disgrace to us that the priests of false gods, jugglers, mountebanks, the most infamous persons may be legatees? Our priests and monks only are prevented from it—interdicted by a positive law, and this law not one framed by the emperors who were enemies to our religion, but by Christian princes. As for the law itself, I do not regret that it has been made, but I regret that we have required it. It was a wise foresight that dictated it, but it is not strong enough to protect against avarice, and we can even boast of eluding it by fraudulent trustees." Of their luxury he speaks yet more severely. "I am ashamed," says he, "to say it, but there are men who seek the priesthood, and the offices of deacons, only that they may see women with less restraint. Dress is all their care. Their hair is curled with tongs, their fingers blaze with the fire of their diamond rings; and they will scarcely touch the ground with their feet, so afraid are they of a little damp or dirt. You would think, to see them, that they were youthful bridegrooms instead of priests."

The avaricious and the luxurious recognised their portraits in these delineations, and revenged themselves by calumniating the author. They accused him, in their turn, of abusing the pious friendships he cultivated with the softer sex: and he, unwilling,



by persisting in them, to give the slightest foundation for malignity to build upon, resolved to return to his humble cell in Bethlehem. The death of Pope Damasus, at this time, hastened his determination, as it deprived him of one of his warmest friends and most powerful advocates. Previous to his departure he wrote to Asella, a Roman lady, with whom he had long been on terms of the most endearing intimacy, to clear himself from the calumnies brought against him; he concludes his letter with the most affectionate adieus.

“ It is at the moment of my embarking, noble Asella, that I write, full of grief, my eyes bathed in tears, yet thanking God that he has judged me worthy to be hated of men. Senseless that I was, I thought to sing the song of the Lord in a strange land; and, abandoning Mount Sinai, I went after the vain hopes of Egypt. I ought to have remembered the way-faring man in the Evangelists, who had scarcely set out from Jerusalem, ere he was despoiled and beaten, and left for dead . . . . My enemies have sought to cover me with the disgrace of crimes of which I am innocent; but I know we may arrive at heaven equally with a bad, as a good name. Salute for me Paula and Eustochium, who, let the world say what it may, will ever continue to be my sisters in Christ. Salute Albina their mother, Marcella, Marcellina, and Felicia, and say to them we shall all meet one day before the tribunal of God, when the conscience of each will be laid open.

Adieu! model of the purest virtue. Bear me in your remembrance, and offer up your prayers, that the waves may be appeased on my voyage."

Embarking at Ostia, Jerome returned, by a long circuit, into the East, visiting in his route the islands of the Greek Archipelago, passing through Antioch, and staying some time at Alexandria, to profit by the multifarious knowledge of Didymus the blind, the original inventor of the raised types for enabling those deprived of sight to enjoy the blessing of reading, and the wonder of his age for his erudition and ingenuity. Then, traversing again Egypt and Palestine, he finally arrived once more at the quiet harbour of his cell in Bethlehem. Paula, with her daughter Eustochium, followed him into Palestine, and founded there, under his direction, two monasteries, one for men, and another, distributed into three communities, for her own sex.

Jerome at the same time undertook the direction of a certain number of children, and continued his labours upon the Sacred Writings: his pious occupations were, however, disturbed by the disastrous state of declining Rome; that mighty empire which had, during ten centuries of triumphant fortune, subjugated the whole world to its sway; but which now undermined, even by the excess of its wealth, and by the corruption of manners attendant on it, trembled from its base, and began to give way on every side. Sustained awhile by the vigour of Theodosius the Great, it speedily fell under the

weakness of his successors. The conquered nations, long watching for the moment of vengeance, at length perceived it nigh, and precipitated themselves at once upon the undefended frontiers. The Goths rushed like a torrent over Italy, rich with the spoils of the world, and its easy conquest excited the avarice of twenty other nations, ignorant of all arts but those of destruction. The West was covered with a cloud of barbarians—the Gauls became the prey of the Vandals—Alaric entered a conqueror into Rome with the Huns—Ataulphus, still more cruel, devastated it with even greater fury. St. Jerome beheld, as it may be said, these calamities from his cell: he groaned over them in spirit, and his language rises almost to inspiration as he describes them. “I am horror-stricken,” says he, “at the heaps of ruins which everywhere meet our eyes. For more than twenty years the country which separates Constantinople from the Julian Alps has been saturated with Roman blood. Scythia, Thrace, Macedonia, Dardania, Thessalonica, Achaia, Epirus, Dalmatia, both the Pannonias, are all at the same time invaded, contested, ravaged by the Goths, the Sarmatians, the Quadri, the Alans, the Huns, the Vandals, the Marcomans. How many illustrious ladies—how many virgins consecrated to the Lord—how many people equally respectable by their rank and virtues, have been the prey of their brutal fury! How many bishops carried away into captivity! How many apostles massacred! Churches depopulated, sacred

temples overthrown, and altars turned into stables, by these barbarians ! The relics of the martyrs have been taken from their tombs ; every where are lamentation and mourning—every where is to be seen the image of death, multiplied in a thousand shapes. From one end of the world to the other, the empire crumbles into dust—and only our pride survives, to stalk with up-raised head, amidst the ruins. Can there be any remains of nobleness or courage at Athens, at Lacedæmonia, among the people of Arcadia, nay throughout all Greece, subjugated as they are at this moment to the yoke of barbarians ! The East seemed safe from these calamities—it only knew of their existence by the reports which were spread of them from afar ; but behold, during the course of the year which has just closed upon us, a troop of wolves, not from Arabia, but from the midst of the most distant rocks in Caucasus, has poured down upon its vast provinces, with torrent-like impetuosity. What monasteries have become their prey ! What rivers they have made to blush with human blood ! Antioch besieged by them, every city bathed by the Halys, the Cydnus, the Orontes, the Euphrates, threatened by their arms ; bands of captives carried far from their country ; Arabia, Phœnicia, Palestine, Egypt, mute with terror !—No : if I had a hundred mouths, a hundred tongues, a voice sonorous as brass, they would not suffice to describe such a host of evils.”

Jerome did not, however, content himself with

lamenting over the misfortunes of the civilized world at this astounding period ; he threw open the monasteries to the crowds of strangers, who fled from Rome in flames, to seek an asylum in Palestine ; among the consecrated spots, which seemed to have been prepared for them beforehand, under the blessing of Providence, by the foresight of Christian piety and zeal. He sold for them the little that remained of his patrimonial property, and lavished on their afflictions, at the same time, the most generous attentions of hospitality, and the most soothing consolations of religion. He received many of the illustrious fugitives, accustomed to purple and fine linen, in his own humble cell, close to the spot where the King of kings and Lord of lords came into the world, to give an example of voluntary poverty and suffering. The descendants of the Scipios and the Gracchi crowded round the foot of Calvary for consolation. Jerome was then writing his Commentary on Ezekiel ; he applied to Rome the words of the prophet on the ruin of Tyre and Jerusalem, “ *Wherefore I will bring the worst of the heathen, and they shall possess their houses. I will also make the pomp of the strong to cease, and their holy places shall be defiled : mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour upon rumour. . .* ” But when he came to the words, “ *They shall remove, and go into captivity ; and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the countries,* ” he cast his eyes

upon the unfortunates who had sought his protection; and the rugged Dalmatian, the self-subdued Christian, was overcome, as he attempted to speak, and melted into tears of compassion and anticipating dread.

The virtues which excited the respect of the Barbarians themselves, could not defend Jerome against the malice of his Christian adversaries, even in this time of general calamity. The Pelagians and Luciferians set fire to the two monasteries which he had founded at Bethlehem, conjointly, as we have already said, with Paula and Eustochium her daughter, and chased him, for a time, from his cherished retreat. They could not, however, deprive him of his final resting-place, near the spot he had loved so well. He died on the 30th of September, 420, and his remains, already wasted to a skeleton by his continued abstinences, were buried in the grotto of his monastery at Bethlehem.

The works of this great man were published by the Benedictines in 1704, in five folio volumes; before that time they had been published by Erasmus and Marianus Victorius, and many other editions of them have since appeared. As a scholar, we have already shown that his erudition was immense; his style was like his character, lively and impetuous, carrying his reader along with him, and equally happy in its fertility and conciseness. It was sometimes deficient in the purity and elegance which distinguished the Roman literature in its most classic periods, and the fecundity of his genius insensibly

led him into a profuseness of ornament and illustration; but he is invariably noble and interesting. His letters are full of Christian zeal,—in them the warmth of his heart is felt in every line. They alone, with the treatises connected with them, occupy two folio volumes; they embrace, as well as discussions on religion and morality, many of his funereal eulogies, and his precepts on education; a subject on which he took particular interest, and was continually consulted.

The translation of the Holy Scriptures, says Nodier, which the Church has consecrated under the title of the *Vulgate*, associates the name of Saint Jerome with those of the *Inspired Hagiographers*. God seems to have destined him for another Esdras, to gather up the treasures of His Word and preserve them to future ages. His controversies and discussions on abstract points of no practical importance, are rarely even looked into at the present time; and when they are occasionally inquired into, the result may only be a wish that his time and energies had not been wasted on them; but it must be considered that, in their day, they had their use. He was in friendship or in controversy with all the most celebrated men of his time, and he has characterized most of them in his catalogue of Christian writers, with a fire and precision which make it a model of eloquent and rapid biography. His Commentaries on the Sacred Writings are an illustrious monument of his learning, his piety, his astonishing application.

# SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS

OF

## SAINT JEROME.

### COMING OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE economy of the whole world, visible and invisible, as well before as since the creation, has relation to the coming of Jesus Christ upon the earth. The cross of Jesus Christ is the centre to which every thing tends, the summary of the history of the universe.

*Commentary on the Scriptures.*

### CONDOLENCE.

. . . . I HAVE passed the bounds prescribed to a letter of condolence; and whilst endeavouring to prevent your weeping over a single death, I have been unable to prevent myself from weeping over that of the whole human race. It is said that Xerxes, that powerful monarch of the Persians, who levelled mountains, and filled up seas, looking down from an elevated position on the immense multitude of his soldiers, and the innumerable army which he carried in his train, shed tears at the thought, as he surveyed them, that of so many thousand men, gathered together beneath his eyes, not one would be left in the course of a hundred years. Oh! if there were any elevation sufficiently lofty for you and me to discern from it the entire face of the earth, at one point of view, we should see the whole world buried in its own ruins,—nations against nations, kingdoms



against kingdoms:—here, tortures and massacres; there, shipwrecks and crowds of captives. Here, a generation rising; there, one sinking into the grave: here, shouts of joy; there, cries of grief; here, all the insolence of prosperity; there, the excess of misery. We should see, not merely the army of Xerxes, but all the human race now breathing on the earth, equally condemned to become, within a little space of time, the prey of death. Let us pause,—there is no power in language to respond to the grandeur of such a theme, and all discourse falls short of thoughts like these.

Let us return, then, to ourselves: let us descend from the lofty regions we had for a moment, in imagination, reached, and let us cast our eyes upon our own existence. Tell me, I pray you, have you ever remarked how, by what gradations, you have passed successively from the cradle to infancy, then to adolescence, then to the maturity of life, and, finally, to old age? Every day we are drawing nearer to death, every day we are changing, and, nevertheless, we believe ourselves immortal. The time that I am even now employing, in dictating, writing, looking over and correcting what I have written, no longer makes a part of my life. Every point that my copyists trace, is a point of time taken from the duration of my existence. We often write to each other, my dear Heliodorus, our letters cross the seas, and every bound that the vessel makes, over the wave which it furrows in its course, carries away a moment with it. The only reality that remains to us, is the entire union which the love of Jesus Christ has formed between us . . . by it our dear Nepotian, though absent, is always with us; by it, notwithstanding the distance which separates us, he brings us together, and binds us still more closely to each other. He is the pledge of our mutual affection: let one spirit unite, one sentiment animate us. Let us take example of the holy

bishop Chromatien, who bears the loss of his brother with such heroic resignation. Let the name of our son, of Nepotian, incessantly be found beneath our pens, and upon our lips. Death has robbed us of his presence: let our recollections of him continually restore him to us; and if his conversation be henceforth wanting to us, never, at least, let him be wanting to our conversation.

*To Heliodorus, on the Death of his Nephew Nepotian\*.*

#### DIGNITY OF THE PRIESTHOOD.

THERE is nothing more grand than the priesthood,—nothing more terrible than the fall of the priest. Let those, then, who rejoice in their elevation, tremble lest they should fall from the height of it.

*Commentary on Ezekiel.*

#### EDUCATION OF A DAUGHTER.

LET her be brought up, as Samuel was in the Temple and the Baptist in the desert, in utter ignorance of vanity and vice; let her never hear, learn, or discourse of any thing, but what may conduce to the fear of God. Let her never hear bad words, nor learn profane songs, but as soon as she can speak, let her learn some part of the psalms. No rude boys must come near her, nor even girls, or maids, but such as are strangers to the maxims and conversation of the world. Let her have an alphabet of little letters, made of box or

This was the young man, through tenderness for whom, when yet an infant, Heliodorus had resisted his own inclinations, and his friends' importunity for him to return to a solitary life. He was a young man of admirable piety, great personal beauty, and devoted to God from his earliest years. He was rewarded by a call from this world to a better, in the flower of his age. He left his tunic to St. Jerome, having given, long before, all his possessions to the poor. St. Jerome has perpetuated the young man's virtues, and his own affection for him, in the affecting letter to Heliodorus, from which the above extract is taken.

ivory, the names of all which she must learn, that she may play with them, and that learning be made a diversion. When a little older, let her form each letter in wax, with her finger, guided by another's hand ; then let her be invited, by prizes and presents suited to her age, to join syllables together, and to write the names of the patriarchs down from Adam. Let her have companions to learn with her, that she may be spurred on by emulation, and by hearing their praises. She is not to be scolded or brow-beaten if slow ; but to be encouraged, that she may rejoice to surpass, and be sorry to see herself outstripped by others, not envying their progress, but rejoicing at it, and admiring it, whilst she reproaches her own backwardness. Great care is to be taken that she conceive no aversion to her studies, lest their bitterness remain in riper years. Let the words which she learns be chosen and holy, such as the names of the prophets and apostles. Let her run down the genealogies from Adam, that even in this a foundation be prepared for her memory hereafter.

A master must be found for her, who is a man both of virtue and learning ; nor will a great scholar think it beneath him to teach her the rudiments of letters, as Aristotle did Alexander the Great. That is not to be contemned, without which nothing great can be acquired. The very sound of letters, and the first elements, are very different in a learned and in an unskilful mouth. Care must be taken that she be not accustomed, by fond nurses, to pronounce half words, or to play in gold and purple. The first would prejudice her speech, the second her virtue. Great care is necessary that she never learn what she will have afterwards to unlearn.

The eloquence of the Gracchi derived its perfection from the mother's elegance and purity of language, and that of Hortensius was formed on his father's breast. What

young minds imbibe is scarcely ever to be rooted out, and they are disposed sooner to imitate defects and vices than virtues and good qualities. Alexander, the conqueror of the world, could never correct the faults in his gait and manners, which he had learned in his childhood, from his master Leonidas.

She must have no nurse, or maid of light carriage; or that is talkative, or a tippler. When she sees her grandfather, let her leap upon his breast, hang round his neck, and sing hallelujah in his ears\*. Let her be amiable to all; but she must be apprized, early, that she is to be the spouse of Christ. No paint must ever touch her face or hair, to forebode the flames of hell. If the faults of grown-up age be imputed to parents, how much more are those of an age which knows not the right hand from the left. If you are solicitous that your daughter should not be bitten by a viper, how much more that she be not hurt by the poison of all the earth. Let her not drink of the golden cup of

\* The grandfather of the little Paula, to whose mother, Læta, this letter on her education is addressed, was a heathen, and a priest of Jupiter. St. Jerome exhorts his family to convert him by the example of their own virtues, and says, "I am persuaded that Jupiter himself might have believed in Jesus Christ, had he had such an alliance and family as yours." This letter, interesting as it is from the light it throws on the manners of the times, and admirable in the good sense of the major part of its remarks, is yet more affecting in the condescending love with which its writer stoops his haughty intellect, and softens his rugged nature, to fit his admonitions to the tender capacity and endearing helplessness of an infant. We may almost fancy we see the rugged solitary of the desert, leaning over the child, as her little fingers grasp the ivory letters, or smiling at her, as she leaps, with the playful fondness of her age, into her grandfather's arms. The little Paula was subsequently sent to Bethlehem, to her grandmother Paula, and her aunt Eustochium, whom she imitated alike in their virtues and their seclusion from the world; devoting herself to a religious life in her grandmother's monastery, having previously had her education superintended by Saint Jerome himself, according to a promise he made to that effect, provided she should be sent to Bethlehem.

Babylon, nor go abroad with Dinah, to see the daughters of the world. Let her never play with her feet, nor learn any levity or vanity. Poisons are only given disguised in honey, and vices never deceive, but when presented under the appearance of virtues.

*Letter to Læla, wife of Toxotius, St. Paula's son.*

#### EXAMPLE AS NECESSARY AS PRECEPT.

AN eulogium upon poverty and self-denial comes ill from a minister living in luxury and wealth : destined to fill the place and functions of the apostles, he ought not to content himself with repeating and commenting on their maxims ; he ought to follow their examples and practise their virtues.

*Commentary on Haggai.*

#### FALSEHOOD.

FALSEHOOD dares not appear, except in the garb of truth ; and it is only under this disguise, that she can impose even on the most simple.

*Commentary on the Scriptures.*

#### HIDDEN SENSE OF THE SCRIPTURES.

COURAGE, O virtuous young man ! When a beginning is so brilliant, what may not be expected from a riper age ? Oh, if it was given me to guide a genius such as yours, not among the fabled vales of Ausonia, but upon the holy hills of Sion ! If I had the faculty of teaching others what my studies have taught me ; if I could produce in as lofty strains the mysterious oracles of our prophets, we should have wherewith to oppose the masterpieces of Greece. Receive, however, from me such advice as may serve to guide you in the understanding of our Holy Books. Every thing in them is bright and tempting, even on the surface ; but it is the substance which is sweeter still, and to taste the fruit, we must pierce the rind. David himself prayed for

light from on high to penetrate this hidden sense—how much more then should we do so, who are yet in the very swaddling-bands of our ignorance! It is not only Moses, whose face is covered with a veil; it is the same with the evangelists and the apostles. Jesus Christ seldom addressed the people, except in parables, and testified sufficiently that his words were of mysterious signification, by saying, “*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*” He only who has the key of David to open and shut can discover these things to us.

*To Paulinus\*, on the Study of the Scriptures.*

#### INFLUENCE OF PLACE.

You measure my virtue by your own. Elevated as you are by rank and fortune above others, you view every thing on a large scale; yet you seat yourself in the lowest place, that the father of the family may make you go up to the top. For what is there in me that can make you forget my mediocrity, and draw on me such magnificent compliments? Be careful, my very dear brother, how you judge my merits by the number of my years. . . . Do not imagine that, because I have been called to the service of Jesus Christ sooner than you, I am therefore better, or more virtuous. How many, in living to a length of days, survive every thing that was most estimable in themselves, and become only as whitened sepulchres, which within are but filth and rottenness. A fervour which is newly born, is better than a piety that has gone to sleep. . . .

\* St. Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, was one of the most illustrious and admirable men of his age; of high birth, immense wealth, great learning, and elevated to the first dignities in the empire, he yet devoted himself early to a life of piety, gave all his possessions to the poor, and was, in short, a model of Christian virtues. St. Jerome, to whom he looked for much of his spiritual instruction, wrote him many valuable letters on matters connected with it.

You speak to me of coming to Jerusalem. There is no praise due to any one for having resided in this city, but for having led a good life there. The Jerusalem we would wish to inhabit is not that which has slain the prophets, and shed the blood of Jesus Christ; but that, the city of God, which a river makes glad by its streams,—which, from the summit of the mountain whereon it is placed, is visible to all eyes, and is called by St. Paul, who rejoices in having a right in it with the just, the mother of the saints.

Not that I repent of having fixed my dwelling in this place; God forbid that I should by so doing furnish ground against myself, for any one to accuse me of inconsistency, after having, like Abraham, abandoned country and family to come here. But God forbid also that I should put bounds to the Divine omnipotence, by pretending to confine within a narrow corner of the earth, Him whom the whole circumference of the heavens cannot contain. . . . If there be any advantage in living in the places where the Saviour of the world has accomplished the mysteries of his crucifixion and resurrection, it is to those who, bearing their cross, and rising again from the dead, every day with Jesus Christ, render themselves worthy of so holy an abode. But let those who say, “*The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord,*” listen to what the Apostle tells them—“*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*” Heaven is not less open to the insulated inhabitants of Britain, than to the citizens of Jerusalem; for “*the kingdom of God,*” says Jesus Christ, “*is within you.*” St. Anthony, and the thousands of solitaries in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Pontus, Cappadocia, and Armenia, have not failed to reach heaven, though they never saw Jerusalem. The blessed Hilarion, born in Palestine, and living in this country, never went to Jerusalem but once, and then only for a single day: thus showing that

though he did not regard with indifference the holy places in his vicinity, he yet did not believe the presence of God to be more especially manifested in any one place in particular.

From the time of the Emperor Adrian to Constantine—that is to say, for nearly an hundred and eighty years—the Pagans have worshipped the statue of Jupiter, on the very spot where Jesus Christ rose from the dead : they have paid the same honours to a statue of marble, consecrated to Venus, upon the mount where the Son of God was crucified. The declared enemies to the Christian name, they imagined that in profaning those sacred places by an idolatrous worship, they should be able to annihilate the belief in the death and resurrection of the Saviour. There was also a wood, consecrated to Thaumuz, that is to say, Adonis, near our town of Bethlehem, the place the most hallowed in the universe, of which the prophet hath said, “ the truth is departed from the earth ;” and they deplored the favourite of Venus, on the very spot where were first heard the cries of the infant Jesus. . . . If the places which Jesus Christ has sanctified by his death and resurrection, were not in a town of such resort as Jerusalem ; if there was not here every thing that is to be found in other towns—courts of law, a garrison, theatres, places of debauch, in a word, if there were only solitaries and pious people, who came hither, I should be the first to invite to it all those who are anxious to embrace a devout and contemplative life : but what an inconsistency would there be in giving up the world, abandoning your country, exiling yourself from cities, for the monastic profession, and then to come here and expose yourself to all the dangers of dissipation, when they can be avoided by remaining at home ! Jerusalem is the rendezvous of all the world ; crowds of strangers come to it from all parts ; men and women meet and mix together indiscrimi-



minately ; and the same seductions which in other places only attack you separately, here combine to overwhelm you with all their united force.

*Letter to Paulinus.*

#### THE JEWS WEeping OVER JERUSALEM.

HEAVILY has the divine vengeance fallen upon the Jewish people, since the perfidious husbandmen, to whom the Father of the family had confided the care of his vineyard, killed the servants he sent to them, and even the Son himself. Banished from their city, they have not the liberty of entering it for more than one single day. They only come to it that day, to deplore its loss ; and even then they are forced to purchase with money the permission to weep over the ruin of their inheritance. As before they bought the blood of Jesus Christ, they are now obliged to buy their own tears ; for, even to their very tears, every thing is sold to them. On the anniversary of the day on which Jerusalem was taken and destroyed by the Romans, we may see the remnant of this miserable people coming into the city, with all the insignia of grief—women bending under the weight of age—old men laden with rags, as with years, mingling in the crowd, bearing in their bodies, and even in their faces, the visible signs of the divine displeasure. This mournful multitude lament the ruin of their temple, whilst the cross of the Saviour shines forth to all eyes, from the summit of the Church of Mount Calvary ; the Anastasia, the Church of the Resurrection of the Saviour, shines with gold, as well on the outside as within ; and from every part of the city is seen the standard of Jesus Christ displayed upon the Mount of Olives. These opposing spectacles make us feel the profound misery of this ungrateful people ; but it does not excite the compassion of which their obstinacy renders them undeserving : their lamentations would be inexhaustible,

and the women, whose locks are dishevelled, and their arms livid from the violence with which they strike their breasts, would not cease to afflict themselves, if the avaricious sentinel did not count the moments of their grief, and levy a fresh tax, upon every fresh flood of tears.

*On the Jews.*

#### LAST WORDS OF ST. JOHN.

JOHN, the disciple whom Jesus loved, worn out with length of years, used to be carried to the Church at Ephesus in the arms of his disciples; and being unable, all weak and languishing as he was, to make a long discourse, he contented himself with incessantly repeating to the faithful assembled round him, "My dear children, love one another." Some, grieved at his frequent repetition of the same injunction, as implying a doubt of their unity, asked him the reason of it. The answer he gave was worthy of one who had rested on the bosom of his God, and was entrusted with its secrets. "It is," said he, "the great precept of the Lord, and includes all the rest, provided it be properly observed."

*On Charity.*

#### MIRACLES OF CHRIST.

THE most astonishing of any of the miracles of our Lord, has ever appeared to me his chasing of the money-lenders, and others who defiled its sacred precincts, from the temple. Not even the voice by which, on the banks of Jordan, God the Father declared him to be his beloved Son, conveys to me a more striking evidence of his divinity. A man whose exterior had nothing in it imposing, close upon the day on which he was to be dragged to suffer an ignominious death on the cross, to enter the temple alone, and triumph thus over the avarice and hatred of the Scribes and Pharisees; to dictate to a passion so strong as the love of gain; and, without any other weapon than the scourge in his hand, to

disperse and put to flight a whole multitude, overturn the counters of the vendors, and accomplish, by himself, what it might have been imagined a whole army would have had difficulty in achieving, is a prodigy that can only be explained by a reference to the Divine Omnipotence. What truly celestial fire must have darted from his eyes ! What divine majesty shone resplendent in his countenance !

*Commentary on the Scriptures.*

#### PRAYER AND GOOD WORKS.

Good works ought to be fortified by prayer, and prayer sustained by good works.

*Commentary on the Scriptures.*

#### PRESUMPTION OF IGNORANCE REBUKED.

I WAS then, it should seem, utterly mistaken when I imagined that it was impossible to acquire wisdom without taking any trouble to obtain it. I have then in vain grown pale over books, attended the schools, and had a Gregory of Nazianzum, a Didymus, and the most learned Hebrews for my masters ; in vain I have consumed my whole life, from earliest childhood to my present age, in the study and daily meditation of the law and the prophets, the evangelists and the apostles. It appears that a man is found who can interpret the Scriptures by inspiration, enlightened solely by his own genius ; perfected in learning, without masters, and more profound in his own unassisted powers, than all those put together, who have laboured most assiduously to understand the Sacred Writings. Compared to his, the eloquence of Cicero, the subtlety of Aristotle, the learning of Plato, or of Didymus, are to count as nothing ! . . . . Give him, at any rate, this advice in charity, not to act in contradiction to himself, but to respect, by his actions and discourses, what he professes by his garb.

*Letter to Dominien.*

## PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY.

COULD it be hoped that in the house of a high priest, consecrated to the worship of idols, his grand-daughter should, under his own eyes, make the name and the praises of Jesus Christ familiar to those around her; and that her grandfather should take a pleasure in listening to her; that in his declining years Albinus should love to hold upon his knees his little daughter, devoted by her mother to Christian virginity. . . . Do not despair, then, of the conversion of your father. “*The things which are impossible with men, are possible with God.*” There is always time to return to him. The penitent thief went from the cross into the kingdom of heaven. You have examples in your own family, of such unhopèd-for changes. . . .

Rome is become a desert to the Gentiles; and the gods who received the homages of nations, have no longer any other asylum than the granaries which they share with the birds of night. The standard of the cross floats distinguished among our legions; and the same emblem of salvation adorns the purple of monarchs, and gives new brightness to the splendour of their diadems. Egypt, become Christian, has consecrated the spoils of Serapis to the true God. Jupiter trembles for his altars. India, Persia, and Ethiopia, peopled with solitaries, spread their holy colonies far and near. The Armenian has thrown his quiver on the ground; the Huns make their deserts resound with our sacred songs; the heavenly flame of charity is kindled on the snows of Siberia; the Getæ assemble together under their tents, as in so many churches, to sing the glories of the Lord; and perhaps they no longer dispute the palm of victory with us, only because they believe in the same God as we do.

*Letter to Lata.\**

\* A Roman lady of high birth and great fortune, wife of Toxotius, the son of Paula. Her mother was a Christian, her father, Albinus, a Pagan and a pontiff, as was the father of her husband also. It was her little daughter Paula, for whom St. Jerome formed many of his precepts on education.

## REGENERATION.

Who can comprehend the manner in which the all-powerful hand of God forms the body, and creates the soul of an infant, in the womb of its mother? Who can conceive the prodigious variety, and at the same time the perfect union, of so many parts? Who can think without being struck with admiration, that of the same matter of which the body is formed, one part should be softened into flesh, another hardened into bones, another propelled through the veins, and another be bound up with the nerves? If, then, the structure and formation of our bodies be such an incomprehensible mystery to us, how much more ignorant must we be of what passes in our hearts, and the secret manner in which God renews and sanctifies our souls by a second birth! Thus the order of nature teaches us to revere that of grace, and not to search into “the deep things of God,” which, as St. Paul says, “knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.”

*On Ecclesiastes, xi. 5.\**

## RELIGIOUS LIFE.

“Is it most advisable,” you ask, “to live alone in solitude, or in communion in a monastery?” My advice would be that you should live in a community†, in order that you

\* The exact knowledge of our spiritual state, like that of the time of our death, is no doubt kept from us for the same reason; that we should not, by our acquaintance with it, be exposed to presumption, or despair; the indolence of security, or the overwhelming anxiety of doubt;—all alike injurious to the soul, and to the exercise of its noblest attribute, its free will.

† It was customary for the fathers to recommend those who wished to embrace a solitary life, to prepare for it by the monastic discipline, in which they generally passed two or three years, exercising themselves in obedience, devotion, silence, and the labour of their hands. They then retired into seclusion, and some, in later times, endeavoured to obtain a complete state of abstraction therein, which they called a spiritual life.

may run no risk from being entirely your own master, and entering without any guide upon a career so utterly new to you. You may, perhaps, take some path that may lead you astray; you may walk more rapidly at first than necessary, and afterwards, fatigued with over-exertion, stop short and sleep upon the road. Vanity finds its way very quickly into the cell of a recluse: for every trifling abstinence that he practises, for every worldly retirement, he indemnifies himself with a sense of his own merit. . . .

Never be without a book in your hand—learn the whole of the Psalms by heart. Once take delight in instructing yourself thoroughly in the wisdom of the Sacred Scriptures, and carnal pleasures will no longer have any attractions for you. Be constantly occupied with some employment, that the devil may never find you idle. If the apostles, who had a right to live by the Gospel, yet worked with their hands, that they might not be a charge to any one; if they, who, as St. Paul says, had so good a right to reap some little of temporal things, in return for the spiritual things they had sown, in such abundance, if they even gave to others, why should not you make your own labours sufficient for your own necessities? . . . Every man who lives in idleness is a prey to a thousand desires. It is an established custom in the monasteries of Egypt to receive no one in them, who cannot work with their hands; and that, less to furnish the means of their subsistence, than to secure them from those fatal wanderings of the imagination which lead to the most culpable irregularities.

Exercise the duties of hospitality, kindly and continually—this again is an apostolic precept—not to content yourself with receiving strangers with that cold and ceremonious politeness, which exists only upon the lips; but to retain them with you, affectionately, so as to give them to believe that their going away would be much more prejudicial to you than their stay.

Never inquire into the evil actions of others: think only of what your own conduct ought to be. . . . Truth does not like concealment; it is not in confidential whispers, and mysterious communications, that she is to be found. Let a tale-bearer learn to repress his malignity, by seeing the pain it gives you to listen to it. . . .

Let us renounce the world, less from necessity than choice;—let us embrace poverty, to draw benefit from it; not merely to suffer from its privations. In the unhappy times in which we live, under the swords that threaten us on every side, to have bread is to be rich enough; to have liberty is to be powerful. The holy Bishop of Toulouse, Exuperius, like the widow of Sarepta, in want of every thing himself, still finds means to minister to his brothers in indigence. Wasted by abstinence, he is sensible of no privations but what he sees others suffer. He gave up every thing he had of his own, for the relief of the members of Jesus Christ; and yet, I know no one so rich as this bishop, who carries the consecrated elements, the body of Jesus Christ, to the faithful, in a wicker basket, and his precious blood in an earthen vase. Let us walk in the steps of this great man, and of all those who resemble him; and who, like him, become poorer and humbler, as they become more and more elevated, in the dignities of their sacred office. Let us follow, by a perfect abandonment of every thing, the example of Jesus Christ, who possessed nothing. The sacrifice is painful, laborious, difficult; but then what a recompense!

*Letter to Rusticus.*

## SAINT AUGUSTINE,

*BISHOP OF HIPPO.*

BORN, 354 ; DIED, 430.

ST. AUGUSTINE was one of those surprising characters, whose universal and happy genius gains them the suffrages even of the most opposing persuasions and opinions; who rule with equal sway over the understanding and the heart, whose energy commands respect, and whose sensibility inspires love. Protestants equally with Catholics, deists with believers, have rendered homage to his penetrating and comprehensive mind. The eloquent Bossuet, who has himself been styled one of those remarkable men whom it is easy to admire, but difficult to describe as great as they really are, speaks of him as the profoundest and most enlightened of the holy fathers, and never travelled without his works, which he likewise constantly kept at his bed-side. "The Church," says Martin Luther, "has never had, since the time of the apostles, a more estimable teacher than St. Augustine. After the sacred Scriptures themselves, there are no writings that can be put into competition with those of this great man." The pious Addison adverts to



them with affectionate veneration; and Voltaire, the sworn enemy of priests, as of the doctrines they preached, read them frequently, and loaded their margins with admiring notes.

“The most astonishing man in the Latin Church,” says Villemain, “he who brought the most imagination into theology, the most eloquence and even sensibility into scholastic disquisition, is St. Augustine. Assign him another epoch, a more advanced civilization, and never man will appear to have been gifted with a more vast and ready genius. Metaphysics, history, antiquities, manners, the arts,—Augustine embraces them all. He writes upon music, as on free-will; he explains the intellectual phenomenon of the memory, as he reasons on the decline of the Roman empire: and his vigorous and subtle mind often consumes in mystic problems a strength of sagacity which would suffice to the sublimest conceptions. His works, the immense repository whence has been drawn that theological science which has so agitated Europe, afford the most lively picture of Christian society, as it existed at the end of the fourth century.”

Augustine was born on the 13th of November, 354, at Tagasta, a small town in Numidia, situated between Madaura and Hippo. His father, Patricius, was in narrow circumstances, though of sufficient respectability among his fellow-citizens to entitle him to fill one of the higher functions of the magistracy. His mother, Monica, was a woman of

extraordinary piety and sweetness; who converted her husband from paganism to Christianity, by the example of her own virtues; exercised as they daily were, by the inequalities of his temper, and the improprieties of his conduct. She brought up her children, two sons and a daughter, with equal tenderness and judgment. Of these children, Augustine, from his cradle to his manhood, cost her the most anxiety, as, at a later period, he afforded her the most gratification. Even in his childhood his ardent temperament, his uncontrollable imagination, and exquisite sensibility, developed themselves with a force that kept him in a state of continual agitation and conflict. Perpetually hurried into the commission of faults, dreading the punishment of them with which he was threatened, early impressed by his mother with a sense of the enormity of sin, and continually loading his tender conscience with the conviction of yielding to it, he passed his early years in transitions from transgression to penitence, and from penitence to transgression. When he had acquired the rudiments of learning in his native place, his father was tempted, by the extraordinary aptitude he displayed, to make every effort in his power to send him to Madaura, where he studied grammar and rhetoric, and the Greek and Latin tongues: to the former he had such an antipathy, that he was with difficulty induced to apply to it, even by the interest he took in its fables; the Latin he acquired with less reluctance. He reproaches

himself in his "Confessions" for the torrents of tears he shed at this time over the death of Dido, when he might with more justice, he observes, have been weeping over his own sins. Patricius, flattered by the reports of his son's ability, resolved to use additional exertion, to enable him to finish his studies at Carthage,—at that time one of the first cities in the empire for magnificence and wealth, and rivaling Antioch and Alexandria by the celebrity of its schools, and the luxury of its manners. This laudable feeling of parental ambition had, however, many difficulties to contend with in the way of pecuniary accommodation. To conquer them, Patricius laboured for a whole year at his business, with an assiduity beyond his strength. During this year Augustine was unfortunately obliged, from considerations of economy, to be retained at home; and so long a time of comparative idleness, was fraught to him with the most fatal consequences to his moral conduct. Plunging into every excess, supported rather than checked in his profligacy by his father, what a double grief, as wife and mother, was it to Monica to witness the dereliction of this beloved son! with what dismal presentiments of his utter ruin did she see him depart, in such a frame of mind, for a place luxurious and dissipated as Carthage then was, so entirely opposite, in all its modes, to its pristine simplicity in the time of Hannibal!

We may easily imagine the impression this splendid city made on the imagination of Augus-

tine. Its ancient commercial spirit had risen again, in the prosperity of the Roman colony founded on its ruins. Its port, its quays, its buildings, all drew forth acclamations of wonder from admiring strangers. One of its streets, known by the epithet of *celestial*, was appropriately distinguished by its magnificent temples; another, that of The Bankers, displayed the most splendid mansions, enriched with a profusion of marble and gold, fit emblems of the wealth of those who inhabited them. Long white veils, gracefully waving over the gates of the schools, elegantly typified the mystery with which the fables of poetry, taught therein, concealed the truths of philosophy; and the theatres represented the finest dramatic productions of Greece and ancient Rome, among which those of Terence, himself an African, were more especially applauded by his countrymen, justly proud of the génius which had lifted its possessor above all the disadvantages of slavery. Augustine delighted to excess in thus contemplating the stormy passions which devastated his own soul; he wept at the fidelity of the pictures; he continually prayed to be delivered from the tyrannical enthrallment in which his senses kept him; but, as he has ingenuously owned in his "Confessions," he internally shrunk from the idea of his prayers being heard, and took no pains to second them by any corresponding exertions of his own. With what fine poetical solemnity of imagery does he say, speaking of himself, at this time:

“The thunders of thy wrath rolled over me, but I heard them not, so deaf had I become, from the noise of the chain of death and sin, which I dragged after me.” Nevertheless, when he was only in his nineteenth year, by reading the exhortation to philosophy, under the title of “Hortensius,” by Cicero, he was inspired with such an ardour for divine truth, that, from the perusal of this treatise, he dates the earnest devotion to the inquiry after it, which, for the succeeding ten years of his life, kept him in a constant state of mental agitation and conflict.

The study to which he now chiefly applied was that of eloquence, as a preparative for his going to the bar; at that time the surest road to distinction and wealth. The disputatious, doubting, sceptical, sophistical spirit, which it is one of the great disadvantages of this profession to engender, found abundant food in Carthage, in the schisms, heresies, and enmities, with which the Christian Church, if it might still be called Christian, under such circumstances, abounded in that city, as well as throughout Africa. The ardent, inquiring mind of Augustine did not escape their influence; he fell into the errors of the Manicheans, a sort of materialists, mystics, illuminati, and pantheists, all mixed up together in equal proportions of absurdity; they maintained the existence of two principles; one good, the other evil, both inherent in matter: the soul they believed to be the production of the good principle, the body, of the evil one. They were addicted to the study of

magic, and enslaved by the grossest fables; intermixed, however, with glimpses of loftier philosophy, by which the ardent mind of Augustine suffered itself to be ensnared and captivated. This was the greatest grief his mother had yet had to encounter: as long as he retained a reverence for holy things, at the bottom of his heart, her faith had sustained her in the hope that it would eventually lead him into the path of truth; but, deprived of this stay, she regarded all his fine talents as so many additional snares to draw him more deeply into impiety and vice. She redoubled her prayers to heaven, and her entreaties to the bishops, especially to St. Ambrose, to use their endeavours for his conversion. His reply was beautifully consolatory. "Depart in peace," said he, "and continue your prayers for him; it is impossible that a mother, who weeps for a son with such tears, can ever have the affliction of seeing him irretrievably lost."

His father having died during the first year of his stay at Carthage, Augustine's expenses were supplied for some time afterwards, by the kindness of Romanian, a friend and townsman of his deceased parent, out of respect to the virtues of his mother during her widowhood.

Augustine returned to Tagasta when he was twenty-one years of age, and taught rhetoric there; still taking up his abode with his mother, to whom he was always tenderly attached. He had been settled some time in this manner, when he had the

misfortune to lose his most intimate friend by death. The description he gives of his grief on this occasion, affords a lively picture of the acuteness of his sensibility. "It was," says he, "as if my heart had suddenly become enveloped in the shades of night; every thing I looked on seemed to wear the aspect of death; my country became odious to me, even my paternal roof was insupportable; every thing that had been agreeable to me, when I shared it with my friend,—without him was torment and affliction. My eyes sought him every where; I could see him no where; and I conceived a horror of every thing, because nothing could restore him to me. No where did any thing seem to say to me, there he is! he is coming! as every thing did when I was away from him, whilst he was yet alive. That man was right, who, speaking of his friend, called him the half of his soul; for whilst he whom I loved, existed, it seemed to me that his soul and mine were only one in two different bodies. Losing him, I conceived an aversion for life, because I was only half-alive,—the very light of day was hateful to me."

Unable to continue in the place where every thing reminded him of his loss, he gave up his school, flourishing as it was, and returned to Carthage, where he opened another, which soon surpassed his former one in fame. Still entangled in the comfortless doctrines of the Manicheans, or seeking refuge from them in the nobler, but yet unsatisfactory specula-

tions of Plato, Augustine passed nine years of the flower of his age, in studies that did not gratify his understanding, and in pleasures that could not satisfy his heart. During this time, when he was in his twenty-sixth year, he composed his first work, upon "Beauty and Order;" when it was finished, he looked on it with so much of the indifference with which a noble mind commonly regards its embodied productions, always inferior to the original conceptions it had hoped to express, that it was mislaid and lost, even in his life-time. Wearied, at length, with perpetual struggles between his acquired scepticism, and his natural devotion, and disgusted with his own irresolution, in continually vibrating between the theory of virtue and the practice of vice, he quitted Carthage and went to Rome; eluding the tender vigilance of his mother, by prevailing on her to pass the night in the chapel of St. Cyprian, under the idea that she should see him in the morning.

After staying a year in Rome, during which time he subsisted by giving private lessons in rhetoric, he was sent by Symmachius, the prefect, to Milan, in the capacity of professor of the same art. The fame of his eloquence, of his learning, and of his Manichean principles, had preceded him to this city; St. Ambrose was then bishop; and, alarmed at the prospect of heresy finding so powerful an auxiliary in the newly-arrived stranger, he publicly warned his people to be on their guard against his seductive arguments.



More flattered by this acknowledgment of his powers, than offended by the open censure of the use he made of them, Augustine went to pay his personal respects to Ambrose; who, in the true spirit of Christian charity, separating the individual from his doctrines, received him with an urbanity that sensibly touched him, and induced him to go to his church to hear him preach. "But," says he, "it was not to hear from the mouth of this man of God, the secrets of eternal life, which I had been so long inquiring after, nor to learn from him a remedy for the disgraceful and inveterate wounds of my soul, known only to Thee, O my God ! it was to ascertain if his eloquence answered to his extraordinary renown, and if his discourses were really deserving of the abundant applauses lavished on them by his people. The truths on which he descanted interested me not—I was touched only by the beauty and sweetness of his compositions."

Augustine could not, however, without veneration, look on this admirable man, whose character was at that time invested with additional dignity, from the firmness with which he had just before conducted himself, as we have already seen, towards the Emperor Theodosius, stained, as he justly considered him to be, with the blood of his subjects, in the massacre of Thessalonica. Augustine's soul was formed to admire the grand and beautiful; he felt the full force of these attributes in the genius and virtues of Ambrose. He returned again and again

to hear him ; but the more profound the homage he rendered to his eloquence, the more pertinaciously he struggled against conviction from his arguments.

Obstinately bent upon searching for truth every where but in the only sanctuary where it is to be found, agitated by remorse, chained by habit, alarmed by conscience, subjugated by passion, touched by the beauty of virtue, seduced by the allurements of vice, unsatisfied in the midst of gratifications which he found were not enjoyments, always struggling between the absurdities of his sect, and the mysteries of Christianity, he seemed to shun the light which shone around him, and to be angry with the hand that sought to release him from his fetters.

It was whilst he was in this state, that his mother Monica pressed him once more to her affectionate bosom ; hearing of his arrival at Milan, she had crossed the seas to follow him, and was rewarded for all the anxiety, the fatigue, and danger she had incurred, by finding him gradually opening his mind to the reception of the words of truth, and by, herself, deriving consolation and instruction from Ambrose, to whom she already felt unbounded gratitude on account of her son.

Of this important period of his life, Augustine gives an interesting account. He had residing with him, two intimate friends, Alippus and Nebridus ; the first was like himself, a native of Tagasta, and had been his pupil ; the other had left a fine estate he possessed near Carthage, solely to come and live

with him, and share in his philosophic studies. Being joined by a few more friends, among whom was his early benefactor, Romanien, they entertained an idea of living together in a small community; but Augustine felt a consciousness, in which he did not stand alone, that he was not in a state to detach himself entirely from earthly things, and preferred acceding to his mother's proposal, of a matrimonial alliance for him.

The young person whom Monica intended to be the wife of her son, being of too tender an age to enter into marriage, it was deemed advisable to defer their union two years; and Augustine, thus left without motives for domestication, found, to his exceeding humiliation, that he was still the slave of degrading appetites and worldly inclinations.

Whilst he was thus the alternate prey of satiety and remorse, he became acquainted with Simplicien, an aged priest, who had been exceedingly instrumental in the conversion of many pagans to the Christian faith; and, among the rest, of Victorinus, the celebrated rhetorician, whom we have already mentioned as the friend of Jerome, and who had likewise distinguished himself by his translations from the Platonists. Augustine happening to speak of these translations to Simplicien, the old man related to him some of the circumstances attendant on Victorinus's embracing Christianity; and of the proof he had afforded of his sincerity, in giving up his school and his profession, in the time of Julian

the Apostate, rather than renounce his faith. This narration made a forcible impression on the mind of Augustine: shortly afterwards, being in his chamber with his friend Alippus, they received a visit from one of their countrymen, named Ponticien, who held a considerable office at court; he also was a person of great piety, and being delighted to see the Epistles of St. Paul on the table, he turned the conversation on religious subjects; and related to the young men many particulars respecting the lives of the Solitaries in Egypt, especially of the venerable St. Anthony, of whom they had not before heard; and of the numerous monasteries scattered throughout the deserts, and the religious practices observed in them.

No sooner had he taken his leave, than Augustine rose, and pressing Alippus in his arms, with extraordinary emotion, he exclaimed, in a voice broken by his contending feelings, "Oh! my friend, what is all this that we have heard? Is it that ignorant unlettered men have been beforehand with us, and possessed themselves of heaven, whilst we, with our heads full of our boasted sciences, are yet senseless enough to be the slaves of our own flesh? Can there be any disgrace in following, where such men have opened the way? Would it not rather be disgraceful not even to have the strength to follow, where they have led?" With many other passionate incoherences, he at length rushed out of the room; and Alippus, alarmed at his agitation, followed him unperceived. Augustine

has painted this eventful moment so powerfully in his "Confessions," that it is impossible, without injustice to him, to describe it in any other words than his own.

"Annexed to the house wherein we had an apartment, there was a small garden, open to us, as well as to the rest of the lodgers; as the owner did not reside on the spot. In the agitation of my soul I ran to this place, where I thought no one could interrupt the struggle I felt within myself; the result of which was known to Thee, O God, though I was ignorant what it would be. . . .

"Into this garden then I ran, and Alippus softly followed me. But I could not feel myself alone, and at liberty, whilst he was so near; and he, how could he leave me in the state in which I then was? We sat down on a seat the farthest from the house. My very soul seemed to tremble with agitation, and I felt in a tempest of indignation against myself, for my tardiness in entering on the new life for which I seemed to have pledged myself with God, and which every thing within me called upon me to embrace.

"Alippus, meanwhile, seated beside me, waited in silence for the end of this extraordinary agitation. But when an attentive examination of myself had made me thoroughly acquainted with all my misery, and crowded it all before my eyes, I felt a hurricane rising within me, which at length found vent in a storm of tears; to deliver myself up to it more

freely I left Alippus, for it seemed to me as if it was only in solitude that I could weep. I went as far from him as I could, that I might not any longer be restrained by his presence; he saw the state I was in, and entered into my feelings,—I endeavoured to say something, but my words were choked in my tears; he started up, but remained standing in the place where he had been sitting; he was motionless with astonishment. As for me, I had thrown myself on the ground, under a fig-tree, I know not why; and I there gave free course to my tears, which flowed in rivers, O my God! as an acceptable offering to Thee. To Thee I addressed a thousand things not in these words, but in this sense,—‘*O Lord, how long wilt thou be angry against me? Remember no more my iniquities!*’ for I felt that they still retained dominion over me. I kept letting words escape me that could not have been listened to without pity. ‘*When? What day? To-morrow? The day after? Why not now? Why not this very hour put an end to my shame?*’

“Whilst I was giving utterance to these words, and weeping bitterly in the contrition of my heart, I suddenly heard, from a house, a voice as of a child, or young woman, singing, and repeating, by way of burden to the song,—

‘Take it and read, take it and read.’

Immediately changing my posture, I began attentively to call to my remembrance whether I had ever

heard children, in any of their sports, make use of words like these; but I could not recollect any thing of the kind. I checked my tears and arose, regarding the words I had heard as an order from heaven, for me to open a book, and read the first sentence on which I might cast my eyes. I had heard it told of Anthony, that he had been admonished in this manner, by reading the gospel, taking to himself the words which he found when he opened it by chance in the middle,—‘*Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.*’ This oracle, O my God! immediately turned him to Thee.

“Instantly, then, I returned in haste to the place where Alippus was sitting, for I had left the book of the apostle there, when I got up. I took it,—I opened it,—and read in silence the first sentence which came before my eyes. ‘*Live not in rioting and drunkenness; not in chambering and wantonness; not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*’ I read no further, it was unnecessary; for, in fact, no sooner had I finished those words, than the light of security seemed to spread itself over my heart, and the clouds of uncertainty to disappear. Alippus asked me what I had been reading; I pointed out to him the passage with my finger, and went away.”

From this moment the resolution of Augustine to devote himself to the Christian life was fixed,

and he declared it to his mother, with all the composure of a noble mind that had found at last its lofty destination. Monica listened to him with tears of joy and gratitude, and saw herself repaid, at that instant, for all her past anxieties. Augustine's first step was to renounce all his worldly engagements, as speedily as he could do so without making an ostentatious display of his motives. It was then within three weeks of the vintage, when it was customary to give vacations in the schools; he therefore retained his professor's chair till this time, and then relinquished it for ever; on the plea of an affection of the lungs, from which, indeed, he had already suffered enough to justify himself in holding it out as an excuse for the resignation of his office.

As soon as he was released from his employment, he retired to a house in the country near Milan, lent him by Verrecondius, a professor of grammar in that city. He took with him his mother, his son Adeodat, the offspring of one of the connexions he so deeply repented of, under his altered views, his brother, his friend Alippus, and some other of his friends and relatives. He here wrote his "Soliloquies," and his "Treatises against the Academicians," "On Order," and "On a Happy Life,"—which last is the substance of a conversation he held with his friends in his retreat, on his birthday, when he entered into his thirty-third year. He likewise attended to the studies of his son, and of the young people under his care, whose education was



not yet completed; among whom were the sons of his friend Romanien; and the greatest recreation he allowed himself was to explain Virgil to them, every evening before supper.

After some months of preparation, Augustine returned to Milan, and received baptism from the hands of Ambrose, along with his tenderly-cherished Adeodat, and his friend Alippus. He then resolved to go back into Africa with his mother, his son, and the friends who had already shared his retirement. They accordingly set off. At Ostia they stayed some days, as well to recover the fatigue of their journey as to make preparations for their embarkment. It was here that Augustine had the most interesting conversation with his mother which he had ever been permitted to enjoy with her in the world she was then about to leave. He has related it himself with touching tenderness. They were sitting together, alone, in the window of a room that looked upon the garden, when it took place: the subject of it was the joys of Paradise. Five or six days afterwards Monica was attacked with a fever. "You will bury your mother here," said she to her sons, who were overwhelmed with grief at the thought of losing so excellent a parent; and within ten days from the commencement of her illness, Augustine performed the last sad offices of filial piety in closing her eyes. He had the consolation to know, that the change in his sentiments and life had left her nothing to wish for, as she had herself

expressed to him in the conversation so recently impressed upon his memory. "There is no longer any thing in this world," said she, "that can affect me. Why should I seek to stay where I have nothing to desire? The only thing that made me wish to live, was my hope of seeing you a Christian before I died. God has granted my prayer, even beyond what I had dared to ask, since I see you not only entirely devoted to his service, but despising, for his sake, every thing in this world, that you formerly thought most desirable and delightful."

Nevertheless, a parent so tender, so pious, so enlightened, as Augustine had ever found his mother, could not be taken away from him at a moment when he had renounced all other ties, without leaving a dreadful void in his heart. "I have felt as though my life were rent in twain," says he, writing to his friend Alippus, to inform him of his bereavement. And thirteen years afterwards, we find him still mourning over her death with filial tears and admiring regrets; but so it is, that great and good men have ever lamented their mothers, if they have owed to them, as has generally been the case, any of their excellence or success.

Unable, in the first moments of his grief, to return to his native place, without the beloved parent with whom all his tenderest recollections were entwined, Augustine remained some time in Rome; where he combated the errors of the Manicheans, by which he had so long himself been enthralled, in his two

books entitled, "On the Morality of the Catholic Church," and "On the Morality of the Manicheans." He likewise wrote, during his residence there, his Treatises "On the Soul," and "On Free-Will," in the form of Dialogues between himself and his friend Evadius. The prayer for illumination with which he begins his "Essay on the Soul," manifests the fervour of his piety. "Sole Essence! Only Truth, Eternal, wherein there is neither admixture nor alteration! No inequality, nothing perishable, nothing of change, nothing accessible to the ravages of time or death; with whom there is neither privation nor excess: God! Sovereign Creator, Universal Providence, nothing above thee, nothing beyond thee, nothing without thee, hear me my God, my Lord, my King, my Father, Principle of my life."

After passing a year and a half in Rome, Augustine returned into Africa; immediately on his arrival, he sold all he possessed to give the product to the poor, reserving barely sufficient for his own support. He spent three years in Numidia with his friends; here they led the lives of the primitive Christians, devoting their time to pious exercises and good works, and having but one table and one purse, as they seemed to have but one heart, among them: they divided what they termed their leisure, between study and the labour of their hands; and set an example, in their own little community, of the virtues which formed the recommendations of mo-

nastic life, the short time that it existed in its original purity and perfection.

During this time, Augustine wrote his treatise "On True Religion," his "Commentary on Genesis," and his work entitled "The Master," in dialogues between himself and his son Adeodat, who was snatched from him shortly after by death, in his sixteenth year, just when his opening talents and ripening virtues were promising his father a full reward for all the cares he had bestowed upon his infancy and youth.

Some time after this trying visitation, Augustine was prevailed on by the importunity of a friend, to go and visit him at Hippo, a small maritime town in Numidia. Valerius, the bishop, was a Greek by birth, and not being able to express himself in the Latin language without difficulty, had long wished to find some one to assist him in the sacred offices: the temptation of securing talents and eloquence such as Augustine's, was not to be resisted. He delivered a discourse to his people on the necessity of choosing a priest; all eyes were directly turned towards Augustine, whose reputation was already extended throughout Africa. They insisted on his accepting the sacerdotal office; he yielded to the general wish, and, once entered on his duties, his discharge of them was performed with an activity and zeal, which ensured him the most striking success. He preached every day in Latin, and often twice in the day. His own sensibility communicated

itself to the hearts of his auditors ; his lively images struck the imaginations of the Africans ; he preached love and charity to all, and exemplified his doctrines in his life. He caused an hospital to be built for strangers in the city, and he established in it the custom of annually giving garments to the poor. He repressed, after the example of St. Ambrose, the licentious feasts, which, under pretence of celebrating the festivals of the Saints and Martyrs, had begun to gain ground among the Christians ; asserted every where the claims of the poor upon the rich, and was so compassionate towards those in slavery, that he even sold the sacred vases, to apply the purchase-money to the redemption of captives.

The infirmities of age increasing on Valerius, he, in 395, named Augustine as his coadjutor, with the title of bishop. From this time, Augustine rarely quitted Hippo ; but so powerfully did his talents connect him with the world at large, and influence society, that every episcopal seat in Africa was filled with bishops of his nominating. He devoted two hours every day, at the gates of the church, to the amicable settlement of disputes among his flock ; he undertook the care of youth, as well as the preparation of those of more advanced age for the ministry. He wrote upon the sciences, history, philosophy, and criticism, for his pupils ; and on the most abstruse points of doctrine, and metaphysics ; and for the Churches ; the refutation of heresies, eighty-eight of which he has described in his trea-

tises on the subject; the correction of monastic abuses, the interpretation of the Scriptures, and the institution of canonical laws, all claimed his attention. "If I could give you," says he, in a letter to his sister Marcellina, "an account of my time, and of the things which I am obliged to take in hand, you would be astonished and concerned at the quantity of business which presses upon me. . . . When I have even a little relaxation, on the part of those who are continually applying to me, I yet always find plenty of other things to do; always something to dictate, which prevents me from following such pursuits as would be more to my taste, in the short intervals of quiet, which the necessities or the passions of others leave me."

In addition to the peculiar calls of his own episcopal duties, Augustine was engaged in correspondence, not only with the emperor and the sovereign pontiffs, but, most elaborately, with all the great men of the age—with St. Jerome in Palestine, St. Paulinus at Nola, St. Ambrose, and Simplicien at Milan; with Orosius in Spain; in Gaul, with Severus Sulpicius the historian, Rusticus of Narbonne, St. Germain of Auxerre, Prosper, Lazarus of Arles, Delphin of Bourdeaux, St. Exuperius of Toulouse, St. Hilary of Poitiers, Alethius of Cahors, Vincent de Lerius, Cassien, and the poets Ausonius and Rutilius; with Maximus, Longinien, and Dioscorus, at Constantinople; in short, with all the men of letters in the Lower Empire, by whom he was unanimously styled

“the representative of posterity,” in allusion to the grandeur and penetration of his genius, which soared far beyond the age in which he lived.

In his domestic habits, Augustine observed the due mean between indulgence and austerity. Some of his brethren were accustomed to go barefoot, but he always wore shoes. “I admire your hardness,” he would say, “bear with my weakness.” His garments, likewise, were good, though plain; “It is fit that they should be such,” said he, “as I can decently give to a brother who may be in need.” He did not abstain from wine, though he took it in the utmost moderation; his table was hospitably served; and he took care no conversation should be held at it, but such as was innocent and edifying, insomuch that he had a distich engraved on it, intimating that those who should seek to attack the characters of the absent, had better absent themselves also.

*Quisquis amat dictis absentum rodere vitam,  
Hanc mensam vetitam noverit esse sibi.*

We have already mentioned the licentious meetings, known under the specious name of repasts of charity, which Augustine had put down, in the first instance, at the hazard of his life. He was equally successful on occasion of certain combats, which took place annually at Cesarea in Mauritania; presenting the deplorable spectacle of the inhabitants fighting among themselves, often brothers against brothers, and fathers against children, under

colour of training themselves to martial exercises, wherein the parties frequently received serious and mortal injuries; by his eloquence he prevailed on these barbarians to throw down their arms; they ran to him, and prostrated themselves at his feet. Eight years afterwards, when Augustine related the incident in his "Treatise on the Christian Doctrine," he had to thank God that no disorders of the kind had again occurred. Nor was it the manner more than the matter of his discourses that rendered them thus powerful; many years after his death, a perusal of his sermon on "the Last Judgment" was the cause of converting Fulgentius to Christianity, the duties and doctrines of which he so ably illustrated as to procure him the title of the Augustine of his age.

Augustine had given, in the regulations of his own little establishment, a model of the monastic life common at this time in the East. Soon religious houses on the same plan were multiplied throughout the provinces of Africa. Carthage was full of them. In some the monks lived by the labour of their hands; following the precept of the apostle, "Is there any man who will not work, neither let him eat." But the greatest number were idlers, who justified themselves in doing nothing, by alleging the words of our Lord, "Behold the birds of the air, they sow not; and the lilies of the field, they spin not."

Augustine strongly censured this pious laziness,



and opposed to it the incessant labour of the episcopal life. He describes with energetic contempt, the artifices of the mendicant monks; "They go about in a cowl," says he, "from province to province, resting no where, and changing their abode every day. Some carry with them the relics of saints, or what they pretend are such, and set a price upon them; others rest solely on their habit and their religious profession; others, not standing at a lie, pretend that they are going a long journey, to see their friends. All beg,—all expect something, either to relieve the affected poverty which makes them rich, or to reward the show of sanctity, which in them is nothing but hypocrisy."

But the greatest conflicts of Augustine were with the Manicheans and the Donatists. The former, erring only in their theories, were in their practice mild and inoffensive, and though severely persecuted under Theodosius and his sons, never attempted to return evil for evil; but the Donatists deluged Africa with blood, in the ferocity of their fanaticisms: the schism of this sect originated in a dispute respecting the nomination of a bishop, which was fomented by the interference of a rich lady, named Lucilla, whose haughty spirit had long before rebelled against the discipline of the Church: one class of these schismatics were called Circoncellians, from their surrounding towns, villages, and houses, sword in hand; often reducing them to ashes, and filling the inhabitants with terror and dismay. They

were chiefly peasants and shepherds of Mauritania and Numidia, who, at stated periods, abandoning themselves to a sort of insanity, left their flocks and dwellings, and wandered about the country; not unfrequently murdering the Catholic priests, who happened to fall into their hands, and showing their zeal by frightful suicides among themselves, which they dignified by the title of martyrdoms.

It was singular to see a little sea-port like Hippo, inhabited chiefly by indigent mariners, and a few Roman families, turned into a scholastic arena, by the reputation of its bishop, and the passion for theological inquiries, which pervaded all ranks of people; where the grandest questions that pertain to the nature and destiny of man, his equal rights and immortal hopes, were continually made the subject of discussion.

Augustine, though full of the tenderest feelings, was yet not free from the error reprobated by Athanasius, of imagining that opinions can be changed by force. Under this idea, he justified the penal decrees of the emperors respecting heretics, and boasted of conversions accomplished under circumstances of violence, which must always leave the sincerity of them doubtful. Nevertheless, he shrunk, at all times, from the idea of taking away life, even in cases where it has always been held justifiable, on the authority of both natural and revealed religion: one of his finest letters is to the Tribune Marcellinus on this subject;—it may still be read with

great benefit by modern legislators, and the spirit of clemency it breathes is the more admirable, as the fanatics for whom it pleads, had repeatedly from their pulpits promised the felicities of heaven to any one who should bring the head of Augustine into their assembly.

“I have learned,” says he, “that the Circoncellians, and clerks of the Donatist party, who have been transferred, by the public authorities, from the jurisdiction of Hippo to your tribunal, have been examined by your excellence, and that the greater number of them have confessed the homicide they committed on the Catholic priest Restitutus, and the injuries they inflicted on Innocent, likewise a Catholic priest, in thrusting out one of his eyes, and cutting off one of his fingers. It has given me great uneasiness lest your excellence should punish these men with the utmost rigour of the law, in inflicting on them that death which they have inflicted upon others.

“It is for this reason that I beseech you, in this letter, by the faith you have in Jesus Christ, and conjure you, in the name of His divine mercy, not to do this, neither permit it to be done; though we, in fact, must be wholly unconnected with the death of these men, who are brought before you, not on any accusation of ours, but on the information of those to whom the preservation of the public peace is confided, we are not willing that the sufferings of the servants of God should be avenged, on the principle

of the law of retaliation, by subjecting the guilty to sufferings of the same nature. Not that we are unwilling that bad men should be deprived of the power of doing evil, but we wish that these men, without being deprived of life, or being mutilated in any way in their bodies, may be brought back, by the judicious attention of the law, from a furious insanity, to the calmness of good sense, or turned from mischievous energy, to be employed in some useful labour. Even that would be regarded by them as a sentence of condemnation; but may it not be turned to a benefit rather than a punishment, since in taking away from them the opportunity of persisting in the boldness of crime, it allows them the remedy of repentance. Christian judge, acquit thyself of the duty of a tender father. In thy indignation against guilt, do not thyself forget the claims of humanity; and in punishing the faults of sinners, do not awaken in thyself the passion of vengeance."

We may easily imagine how tenderly a man, who could thus plead for his enemies, would be attached to his friends. The same sentiment which, in early life, Augustine had urged in extenuation of his errors,—“I ask only to love and to be loved,”—now expanded itself, in all the purity with which Divine Grace invested it, among his people, and those who sought his succour. “Grant me,” he says, in one of his addresses, “the lowest place, O Lord, in thy kingdom, but let me have the happiness of seeing

my children about me.” It is in allusion to this glowing temperament of the soul, so admirably adapted for the reception of the sublimest impressions, that St. Augustine is represented in the Catholic Church under the symbol of a flaming heart, and designated by the title of the “Doctor of Grace.”

Severely was his sensibility tried by the calamities with which the Roman empire was overwhelmed, under the incursions of the Barbarians. Fear drove the people back to paganism; they imagined their calamities were the consequence of their desertion of their gods, and they flew to their ancient altars, and loaded them with gifts, to deprecate the anger of the offended deities.

It was at this time that Augustine wrote his noblest and best known work—“The City of God,”—a glorious picture of the superiority and heavenly origin of the Christian religion, of the struggle between the love of things celestial and things terrestrial, which has commenced with the commencement of the world, and of the happiness attendant on the victory of the former. He goes back in it to the formation of society, the institution of governments, the origin of the sciences, the elements of morality, the influence of different systems of religion, and the causes of the rise and fall of nations. It is altogether a wonderful monument of learning and genius, which has been translated into every language in Europe, and from which

succeeding theological writers have continually drawn their finest materials; among others, Bossuet himself, who borrowed the plan of it for the foundation of his *Universal History*. Nor perhaps is the simplicity with which the venerable writer concludes this astonishing display of human intellect the least remarkable, as it certainly is not the least pleasing passage in the work. "I trust," says he, "I have now acquitted myself of my promise. May those to whom I may appear to have said too much, or too little, pardon me; and let those who think that I have said just what is necessary, join me in rendering thanks to God for it."

Whilst Augustine thus laboured to set forth the most resplendent truths of his holy ministry, Alaric, with his barbarian troops, was thundering at the gates of Rome: twice he retreated, pacified with ransom; twice he returned, and finally desolated the city with slaughter and pillage. The Christian churches alone served as asylums. The bishops wrote to Augustine, from the caves and hiding-places in which they had sought temporary concealment, to know whether they should be justified in securing their own safety by flight. He replied that, in cases of individual persecution, to withdraw from it was allowable, and authorized by the example of Jesus Christ himself; but that in cases of general calamity, flight could only be deemed a cowardly and base desertion of the people committed to their care. He gave an example of the fortitude he enjoined,

by remaining himself at his post, when Hippo was besieged, in consequence of the intrigues of Count Boniface, governor of Africa, with the Vandals, in 429. For three months of that time Augustine lavished the tenderest cares upon the inhabitants, the sick, the wounded, the bereaved; nor did he relax in any of his spiritual zeal during this trying period; he continued his controversies with unabated vigour, and incessantly laboured, with all his eloquence, to bring back Boniface to his early sentiments of honour and religion; mingling all his labours with the prayer continually on his lips, that he might not live to see his people perish by the sword. His virtues delayed this fate to them as long as his own life was spared, for his name was so venerated, even by the bandit troops, that they lost their ferocity, as they drew near the walls which protected his abode; and when they finally entered the city, after he was no more, they showed their respect to his memory by sparing his library, and carefully preserving his writings.

Worn out with exertions, anxieties, and overwhelming anticipations of the future, St. Augustine expired, in the seventy-sixth year of his age, forty of which he had spent in the service of the Church. In his last sickness he had the penitential psalms of David inscribed on the walls of his bed-room, in order that expressions of contrition, and supplications for mercy, might be continually before him. He bequeathed his library to the Church,—it was

all he had to leave; for he had provided for his relations, on his first relinquishing the world, and he possessed neither money nor lands of his own.

The year after his death Carthage was taken and sacked by Genseric, and this second church of the East, so learned, so disputatious, so agitated, was laid low. Augustine was the last great man of his time and country, and immediately after he was taken from the world, the ages of barbarism and of ignorance commenced.

The best edition of the works of St. Augustine is considered to be that of the Benedictines, in eleven folio volumes. They consist of ninety-three separate works, comprised in two hundred and thirty-two books, without including his letters. His sermons, of which four hundred remain, are simple yet touching, full of lively thoughts and passionate feelings, which frequently melted the ardent Africans into tears. His letters are highly valuable and interesting, as showing all the fine qualities of his heart, the multifarious acquirements of his mind, and his earnestness in the discharge of the arduous duties of his station in times of surpassing difficulty. His "Confessions" are a wonderfully-eloquent history of the soul, and of all the struggles between the enlightenment of the understanding and the subjection of the will, which forms the object, the trial, and the consummation, of our coming into this world, and passing through it to a better. They breathe in every sentence the profoundest love of



God, who seems graciously to have rewarded his dutiful and adoring attachment, by revealing his excellences and graces to him, in the tender character of FATHER, by which appellation his mercy has authorised us to address him. “Augustine,” says Milner, “taught men what it is to be humble before God. This he does every where with godly simplicity, with inexpressible seriousness: and in doing this, no writer uninspired ever exceeded, I am apt to think ever equalled, him in any age. They wrong this father much, who view him as a mere controversialist. Practical godliness was his theme, and he constantly connects all his views of grace with humility.”

## SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS

### SAINT AUGUSTINE.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF GRATITUDE TO GOD.

It is meet and right, O my God, that, in gratitude to Thee for having redeemed me from bondage, I should offer up a sacrifice of thanksgiving, that my heart and my tongue should incessantly praise Thee, and that all the faculties of my soul should cry, "*Lord, who is like unto Thee?*" What was I, Lord, before I knew Thee! What corruption, what iniquity within me,—in my actions, my words, my will! Thou hast had pity on me; by Thy goodness, by Thy mercy, Thy Almighty power, Thou hast drawn me from the pit of death into which I was plunged, and hast purged my heart of the sink of impurity with which it was before infested. And how is it that Thou hast worked so blissful a change in me, if not by making me cease to will what I would do myself, and begin to will what Thou wilt? Thou hast banished vain pleasures from my heart, but, in order that it should not regret them, Thou hast entered, Thyself, into their place. From that time, Lord, the privation of these pleasures was a greater delight to me, than their enjoyment ever had been, or ever could be; for at that same moment, how sweet I found it to renounce the gratification of my vain amusements, and what joy in quit-

ting the things which before I had so much dreaded to part with! . . . . .

Already my mind found itself affranchised from the cutting anxieties to which ambition, the love of wealth, and shameful and criminal indulgences give birth. Already I began to place all my happiness in communing with Thee, O Lord my God! with Thee, my glory, my riches, my delight, and my salvation!

*Confessions, Book ix. Ch. 1.*

#### ADDRESS TO HIS PEOPLE.

I HAVE not presumption enough to imagine that I have never given any of you subject of complaint against me, since I have exercised the functions of the episcopacy. If, then, overwhelmed at times with the care and duties of my office, I have not granted audience to you when you asked it, or if I have received you with an air of coldness or abstraction,—if I have ever spoken to any one with severity; if, by any thing whatsoever in my answers, I have wounded the feelings of the afflicted who implored my succour,—if, occupied with other thoughts, I have neglected or deferred assisting the poor, or showed, by any displeasure in my countenance, that I deemed them too importunate in their solicitations; lastly, if I have betrayed too much acuteness of feeling with respect to the false suspicions that some have entertained against me, and if, through the weakness of human nature, I have conceived unjust opinions of others, in return, pardon me, O my people, to whom I confess all my faults,—pardon me for them, I conjure you, and so shall you also obtain the pardon of your sins\*.

*Sermons.*

\* The pious and learned Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, always kept this extract before him on his writing-desk, to remind him constantly of the duties and humility incumbent upon his sacred office.

## AFFLICTIONS.

UNDER the equitable Master whom we serve, we do not suffer a single affliction, that has not for its foundation, either his justice, which corrects us for even the most secret of our sins, or his mercy, which thus prevents the faults into which we might otherwise fall. There is not one, therefore, which is not either a just chastisement, or a salutary ordeal.

If, then, we consider ourselves as a family of Christians, we shall see what solid grounds of consolation remain to us, in whatever troubles we may be visited with ; nor have we any right to complain of the present life, since it is only the apprenticeship to one more durable. We make use of the good things it may present to us, but yet as strangers who are not going to tarry ; and we profit by the evils we may be obliged to undergo, by regarding them either as purifications or corrections.

Such are the resources of the suffering Christian ; but when the infidel suffers, it is without benefit, and without consolation.

*City of God.*

## CENSURE.

How readily do men, who ought to be blushing for their own iniquities, every day accuse and blame them in the persons of others. “What a villain that man is!” say they ; “what a shameful thing he has done,—such wickedness is unparalleled.” And perhaps, after all, they only express themselves in this mannner, because people hear what they say. Examine yourself, whether you do not “*regard iniquity in your heart.*” Consider whether you have never thought of doing, yourself, the very same thing you are reprehending in another ; and if you do not exclaim against him, more because he has been discovered in the commission of his crime, than because he has committed it.

*Commentary on the 66th Psalm.*

## THE CHARIOTEER.

WHEN it happens, in the course, that one of the charioteers, either from want of attention or of prudence, is thrown from his seat, or run away with by his horses, there is not any thing to which he does not attribute his accident, rather than to himself; and he lays the blame of it on every part of the chariot, which he now only regards as an instrument of mischief to him. But let him implore the help of God, let this Sovereign master give his orders, let the horses be stopped, who, after having given the people a sort of exhibition they did not look for, in the overthrow of him who guided them, were on the point of affording them a more serious one in his death; let the chariot be put to rights, the driver be replaced in his seat, the reins placed afresh in his hands: let him see himself once more the master of his steeds, and let him manage them with more caution and prudence, and he will then see, directly, that it is impossible for any thing to be better constructed than this very chariot, which just before he thought had been put together solely for his destruction; when he found himself overturned at the precise moment that the order and beauty of the race depended on his maintaining himself in his seat, and directing his horses with requisite skill. Such is exactly the situation in which the soul finds itself with respect to the body, thrown into disorder by the bad use it has made of its liberty.

*On the True Religion.*

## CHRISTIAN UNITY.

Do not complain, if some have gifts which you may not possess. Cherish a spirit of unity, and they will seem only to hold them for you. Let us, then, not think of any thing in ourselves, but let us solely love the unity of the Church. Let us love ourselves in this unity,—the riches of Christian

charity will supply the deficiencies of our individual indigence; and what we possess not ourselves, we shall find abundantly in this wealth in common. Take away envy, and what I have is yours, and what you have is mine. Charity makes every thing our own.

*Commentary on St. John.*

#### CREATION.

IT is not with the world as with an edifice, which, once raised, continues to stand, though the architect does no more to it. If God ceased to govern the world, it would not continue to subsist for a single instant: Divine Providence is a daily creation. All creatures were known to God, even before he called them into being; but they existed only in his prescience, not in themselves. All things began their existence with the qualities which constitute the perfection relative to each. All future ages, all successive generations were present to the vast comprehension of God, from their beginning, and before any thing had a beginning.

*Commentary on Genesis.*

#### DEPRAVITY OF MAN.

WHERE, then, is the innocence of childhood? No; there is no innocence in it. Children are, with respect to their tops, and balls, and birds, with their servants and their masters, exactly what they become in after years, with respect to money, lands, slaves, magistrates, and kings. It is the same source of depravity, of which only the appearance is changed by years; and to the lighter chastisements of a school, succeed, too often, the restraints of a prison, and even the stroke of the executioner.

*Confessions, Ch. 19.*

## EVIL INCLINATIONS.

THE first step to misery is to nourish in ourselves an affection for evil things; and the height of misfortune is to be able to indulge such affections.

*On the 27th Psalm.*

## EXAMPLE OF JESUS CHRIST.

JESUS CHRIST willed that He should be acknowledged as being God indeed, and man indeed. He therefore proved Himself God, by His miracles, and man in His sufferings. There is not a single action in His mortal life, which does not exemplify one or the other of His two natures.

Men seek after the riches of the world with insatiable ardour; Jesus Christ willed to be born in poverty. Our pride makes us indignant at the smallest outrages; he experienced every description of insult. We revolt against the most trifling injury; he suffered injustice, even permitting it to lead him to death. To us pain is insupportable; he allowed himself to be lacerated with scourges, pierced with thorns and nails. We fear nothing so much as death; he submitted to it voluntarily. The death of the cross was regarded as the most opprobrious of any, and it was upon a cross that he was willing to die; in short, in foregoing for himself all the goods, the love of which draws us into the commission of evil, and in exposing himself to all the evils of which the dread turns us away from the search after Divine Truth, he has subjugated both the one and the other, alike, beneath our feet; for every sin we commit has its origin either in the love of some one of the goods which Jesus Christ has despised, or the fear of some one of the evils which he has endured. Thus there is not a single incident in the life of this GOD-MAN which does not serve us as a lesson for the regulation of our own; and in it we find a complete treatise of perfect morality.

*On True Religion.*

## GOD IS LOVE.

IF we ask, What is God? St. John replies, “God is love.” Let us bless His holy name; let us rejoice in God, if we ourselves rejoice in charity. He who possesses charity has no great distance to go in order to find God; let him only look into his conscience, and there he will behold Him. If charity does not dwell therein, neither will God, for where charity is, there doth God reside. Possess charity, and you will see Him, in your own heart, seated as on His throne.

*On the 148th Psalm.*

## HOUSE OF PRAYER.

You need never go far in search of a place of worship: do you wish to pray in a church? collect your thoughts, and offer up your prayer in your own heart.

*On the Gospel of St. John.*

## INCARNATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

“*IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*” It is not here that worldly people make their objections; they are very ready to acknowledge that God made all things by His Word, by His Wisdom, His Truth. The Platonic philosophers admired the expressions that the Word was “*the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,*”—that light was in this Word, as in its origin and source; whence it diffused itself upon the universe, and more especially upon reasonable beings: they found this grand opening of the gospel of St. John full of sublimity, and were ready to write it in letters of gold. If Christianity had only had to teach these great and august truths, however inaccessible they might have been in their loftiness, those who pique themselves on the elevation of their minds, would have made it a



point of honour, to believe and promulgate them ; but the stumbling-block to them is that which follows, that the "*Word came into the world, and dwelt among us ;*" and, which appears more derogatory still, that *the Word was made flesh*. They cannot bring themselves to acknowledge that the Word, of which they had received so exalted an idea, could have descended so low ; and the narrative of the Crucifixion appears to them a still greater absurdity. The Word, born of a woman, laid in a manger, and finally coming to the last humiliation of expiring upon a cross, it is this which revolts these haughty minds, for they do not even desire to know that the first lesson which man, who has fallen through his pride, has to learn, is humility. Hence, therefore, it is, that God, who came upon earth to be the physician of the human race, has taught us to abase ourselves ; and that the first step necessary for a Christian is to be humble ; but these men, inflated with their vain science, were incapable of taking one so indispensable. In the same degree in which they drew near to God by their intelligence, they estranged themselves from Him by their pride.

This mystery was not, however, left without witnesses among men ; it was communicated successively, to the holy of the first ages, by the angels. From the patriarchs it was transmitted to the prophets, particularly to David, who declares expressly the principle of the beatitude which we all seek after. Astonished, for a moment, at the prosperity of the wicked, he is ready to accuse Providence ; but after having reflected more seriously on the nature of these pretended goods of this world, illuminated by superior light, he suddenly exclaims, "*It is good for me to draw near unto God.*" Nevertheless, these same temporal blessings were promised to the Hebrews, as a reward for their fidelity in serving God. This was because the human race were

not capable of being elevated immediately, into the knowledge of divine things; but only in the due course of time, after a succession of many ages. It was necessary for them to be led to eternal and invisible things, under the shadow of things temporal and visible; so ordained, however, that, at the same time that they were promised these for a recompense, they were incessantly enjoined in them to adore THE ONE ONLY GOD: thus did Divine wisdom teach man, whilst still weak and clinging to earthly things, to look to God alone, for all that he deemed necessary for his happiness, in this mortal and transitory state; so that he should never, in the possession of temporal blessings, estrange himself from the worship of Him, in whose favour he still can only live by his willingness to forego them, when obedience to the Divine Will requires the sacrifice.

*City of God.*

#### JUDGMENT OF CHRIST.

THE cross, mark it well, is a tribunal where Jesus Christ, in his office of judge, anticipates his final judgment. He places himself on it between two robbers, one of whom he acquits, and condemns the other. One of them, as will be shown at that awful day, is placed at his right hand, the other at his left.

*On the Gospel of St. John.*

#### JUSTIFICATION OF SINNERS.

*CREATE in me a clean heart, O God!* How is it that David does not say to God, “Reform my heart, heal it, fortify it, correct it;” but *create in me a new heart*? This expression teaches us a great truth—that the conversion of a sinner is an actual creation; so admirable, that that of the universe is only the type and shadow of it. The creation of the universe only cost God a single word; but the justification of the sinner cost Jesus Christ all his blood.

*On the 51st Psalm.*

## THE LORD'S SUPPER.

JESUS CHRIST has given us this sacrament, in the form of meat and drink, of a repast; to teach us that it is a nourishment we ought to use, not rarely, and only on extraordinary occasions, but often; as we take every day the food that supports us. Take, then, this divine nourishment as it may do you good; and if it does you good every day, take it every day. Communicate more or less frequently, as the Holy Spirit of God may inspire you; but as to any habitual preparation, live so that you may always be in a state to be strengthened by the Bread of Life.

*Sermons.*

## LOVE OF GOD.

I LOVE thee, O my God! and if I love thee too little, cause me to love thee more. I cannot measure how many degrees of love may yet be wanting to my soul, to enable it to throw itself into thy holy embrace, and never to separate itself from thee, even my very life hiding itself in the secret of thy countenance. This only I know, that without Thee I find nothing satisfactory. Not only every thing without, but every thing within me is displeasing; and all riches, all acquisitions, are poverty to me, except my God.

*Confessions, ch. viii. b. 13.*

## MEMORY.

IT is not by the senses that the sciences enter the memory. How is it then that it retains things, and whence is the remembrance it has of the affections of the mind? On all these matters I am struck with astonishment and filled with admiration! Yet what we find man, in general, contemplating with admiration, is the loftiness of the mountains, the motion of the waves, the vast extent of the ocean, the immense course of rivers, the regular movement of the stars,—but as to what is wonderful in themselves, they never think about

it. Nevertheless, how astonishing is the power of memory ! I am seized, O my God, with a kind of fright, when I consider its profound abysses, and the multiplicity of things contained in them, even to infinity—and still it is in my mind that this memory is, and my mind is myself. What am I then, O my God ? What is my nature ! And how is it that the principle of life which is within me, is so admirable in the prodigious variety of its operations, and the immense extent of its capabilities ? At this moment, how I seem to walk through these vast fields of my memory, and, as it may be said, in the profound depths, the incalculable caverns, wherein are accumulated, to infinity, such innumerable descriptions of things ; whether they are preserved there by their images, as in all things of corporeal substance, or whether they are themselves present in them, as in all those things belonging to the arts and sciences ; whether they have entered by I know not what impulses, or perceptions, which the mind may have received from them, as in the case of the passions, which also exist in this wonderful depository, even after the soul has ceased to be actually agitated by them ; and yet nothing of all this that is in the memory, is actually in the soul itself. I run through this immense space, I fly over it in some way or other, by the aid of my thoughts ; I penetrate it on all sides, as far as I can ; and on no side do I find any bound ; so unlimited is the power of this incomprehensible faculty, so much is there of activity and strength in this principle of life which animates man, even though he only lives a life subject to death !

*Confessions*, ch. vii.

#### NATURE OF THE DIVINE BEING

WE can find no terms in language, when we would express the Divine nature, that afford us the idea we seek. What an extensive field of thought does this insufficiency in words

open to us ! We ask for a name significative of so much majesty, and not in any or all of the languages of the globe is there one to be found. We endeavour to speak of it, but in whatever way we express ourselves, the subject still remains inexplicable.

*On the Gospel of St. John.*

#### NUMBER OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

Do not imagine that the number of the righteous is comparatively so small. They abound more than you think, only they are hidden by the still greater number of the wicked. In casting a cursory glance upon a threshing-floor, we might fancy there was more straw than grain ; but an eye accustomed to observation is not so deceived : and, when the heap comes to be winnowed, we find a mass of corn, which we had not perceived, whilst it was mixed with the straw. Do you wish then to be able to distinguish the good from the bad ? be good yourself, and you will soon find them out.

*On the 48th Psalm.*

#### PRAYER.

PRAYER is a conversation with God. God speaks to us in his sacred Scriptures, and we speak to Him in our prayers. But is it to God that we really pray ? We pray to Him for riches, inheritances, employments. It is not God that you invoke, but that which you desire to obtain : you seek to render him the instrument of your avarice, not the depository of the pious aspirations of your heart. You call him good, if he grants you what you ask ; but suppose that what you ask is evil ? does not his goodness manifest itself still more in refusing your petition ? Disappointed in your hopes, you change your language : “ How many times,” you say, “ have I prayed ; with what ardour, and yet my prayer has not been heard ! ” What then did you pray for ? Perhaps for the death of your enemy ; but suppose that this

same enemy should, on his side, be praying for yours? And, besides, has he not, in the order of nature and religion, the same rights as yourself?

*On the 85th Psalm.*

#### PROMULGATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Is there in these days a single place in the world where the Gospel is not preached? Can we mention a corner of the earth to which the Sacred Word has not been carried, and with it the hope of salvation? All that is asked of you is to receive the celestial bread—the granaries are full of it. The abundance with which they are filled does not even require you to go and fetch it—it offers itself to you, it has come to you even whilst you have been sleeping. It has not been said, Let all the people of the earth arise, and go to such a place in search of it; but it has been announced to each, at his respective home, according to the prophet, “*every one shall adore him in the place where he is* \*.”

*On the 33d Psalm.*

#### REPENTANCE.

God has allowed of repentance, as a door open to those who might otherwise be tempted to despair; but to keep the bold and presumptuous within the paths of duty, he has ordained that the moment of death should be uncertain. What are the examples we find recorded of sinners who have been converted in their dying hour: the thief at the right hand of Jesus Christ, you reply. I grant it: this is one instance in order that no man shall despair;—but go on—alas! it is the only one, that no man shall presume.

It is not you who, on your death-bed, quit sin; it is sin

\* How admirably do these words apply to the present day, when we consider the exertions made by such venerable public bodies as the “Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge,” and for the “Promulgation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts,” and the incessant exertions of Missionaries, in every part of the habitable globe, for the diffusion of the Blessed Doctrines of Eternal Life.

that quits you : it is not you, who detach yourself from the world, it is the world that detaches itself from you. It is not you, who break your bonds, it is your bonds which break of themselves, through the fragility common to our nature. It is easy to see that he who condemns the irregularities of his life, only at the moment when he is obliged, in spite of himself, to resign it, does not condemn them from conviction, but necessity.

*On Repentance.*

#### REPRIMANDS.

REPRIMANDS ought rarely to be employed, and never but in cases of pressing necessity. When we are obliged to have recourse to them, we ought always to remember that their legitimate object is not to force others to do our own will, but solely to obey that of the Lord.

*Sermons.*

#### THE RICH MAN.

You see how the rich man lives, but recollect, also, that he will die. You see what he possesses in this world, but do you consider what he will take away with him? He has gold and silver in abundance, vast possessions, and innumerable slaves: he dies, and all his wealth is transferred to others, whom, perhaps, he did not know; but what has he taken with him, for himself? He has taken, you will tell me, the costly grave-clothes in which he was wrapped,—at any rate, he has taken with him the expense of a magnificent funeral, and the cost of this superb marble monument. But it is his place of sepulture, and not himself, that profits by that. What if you dress a man richly, who is asleep in his bed: it is the bed you deck, not him; and perhaps, at that very moment, he is dreaming that he is covered with rags.

*On the 40th Psalm.*

## RIGHTEOUSNESS.

THE Saviour, in speaking of righteous works, reduces them into three classes: fasting, alms-giving, and prayer. In fasting, he includes every thing that chastises and mortifies the flesh; in alms-giving, every sort of benevolence towards our neighbour, whether in giving or forgiving; and in prayer, all the exercises of holy inclinations. -

*On Faith and Works.*

## SIN.

THERE are two kinds of sin,—one is born of poverty, the other of excess. The sins of poverty and want are servile and timid. When a poor man steals, he hides himself, he trembles when he is discovered: he would not dare to vindicate his crime, too happy if he can evade its consequences, by shrouding himself in darkness and concealment. But the sins of abundance are proud and bold: they defy censure, they are indignant at it, and do not want for flatterers to approve and encourage them.

*On the Psalms.*

## THE SOUL.

THE soul is the life of the body, and God is the life of the soul. As the body dies, when it loses its soul, so does the soul die, when it is separated from its God.

*Sermons.*

## TOLERANCE.

Do not, my brethren, take umbrage at seeing sinners and heretics among you. What can you know of their future state,—nay, more, what can you know of their present state, in the sight of God. You regard them with pity, as members separated from the body of the Church; but God may look down upon them with complacency, as already re-united to it, and more faithful than yourselves, in the



duties of piety. You see what they are to-day, but you do not see what they may be to-morrow,—what they may be during the remainder of their lives,—what they may be at the moment of their deaths.

*On Virginity.*

#### TRIBULATIONS.

IF you are truly Christians, you cannot expect any thing in the world but tribulations; do not look for better times than those in which we are. My brethren, you deceive yourselves, if you promise yourselves joys which the Gospel nowhere promises you. What does it say? You know very well. We speak to Christians. It is not permitted us to be violators of the faith. What is announced to you, generation after generation, are trials, obstacles, adversities of every description. Have the servants a right to complain, when the master has drunk of the cup, even to the dregs!

*On the 106th Psalm.*

#### TRIFLING FAULTS.

BEWARE how you regard, as trifling, faults which appear of but little consequence. You weigh them, and think them nothing; but count them, and you would be frightened at their number. An accumulation of small faults makes a very large one: grains of sand, gathered together one upon another, form the banks on which the vessel strikes; and it is only by separate drops of water that the torrents are swelled which inundate the country.

*On the Epistle of St. John.*

#### TRUE PHILOSOPHY.

THE most ignorant woman, who is a Christian, and has faith, is incomparably more enlightened than the most profound of the ancient philosophers; for either they positively denied the immortality of the soul, or admitted it as only

possible and dubious ; whilst, on the contrary, through the light of the Christian religion, simple women, young girls, and even children, have not only been fully convinced of this most sublime of all truths, but have even been endowed with sufficient fortitude to assert it, amidst fire and sword, and to seal their belief with their blood.

*To Valerian. Epistle 11.*

#### THE WICKED.

THE wicked only remain on the earth either to be converted themselves, or to be made the instrument of conversion to others.

Evils abound in the world, but if there were no wickedness, there would be no evil. Let each of us live as good a life as we possibly can, and we shall soon find the times become better.

*Sermons.*

#### SPIRITUAL EXISTENCE.

THE questions which your Holiness has proposed to me, in the two letters that I have received, are so important and so profound, that even those who have more leisure, more penetration, and more facility of speech than myself, would be at a loss how to answer them. Of these two letters, one has been mislaid, I know not how ; and although I have sought it every where, with the greatest care, I have not yet been able to find it. The other, which I have in my hand, contains a most consolatory eulogium upon a young man of a pure and holy life, and a faithful servant of God ; and informs us of the manner of his death, and of his appearing afterwards to some of your brethren, by which God has permitted you to be confirmed in the opinion you held of his sanctity. This history has given rise to your proposing a very difficult question,—to wit, whether, when the soul quits the body, it quits it with any other body, by the means

of which it can be contained in a space of the nature of that which contains the present body, and can pass with it from one place to another. Even were I able to treat this matter, I should be obliged to study it very deeply, and to labour at it with great application, and, consequently, ought to have my mind free from all the occupations which press upon me. But if you wish me to tell you, briefly, what I think, I do not in any wise believe that the soul leaves the body, in a body.

As to those visions wherein we even learn something of future events, it would be impossible to explain how they are produced, unless we were to know, beforehand, by what means all that passes within us, when we think, takes place; for we see clearly that in our minds are excited an innumerable number of images, representing to us that which has struck our vision, or our other senses; and this we experience every day and every hour. It is, then, for those who know, not that which causes the order and confusion in which these images present themselves, but merely that which produces them; it is for those, I say, to declare something concerning these extraordinary visions. As for me, I should be so much the less willing to undertake it, as I do not even feel capable of explaining what it is that we experience in ourselves, so long as our life lasts, and the same sleeping as waking.

Even now, at the very time that I am writing this letter to you, I see you, with the eyes of the spirit, without your being present, and without your knowing any thing of it; and I can picture to myself, by the knowledge that I have of you, the impression my words will make upon your mind; yet without being able to comprehend how all this is passing within me. All that I know about it is, that it is not by corporeal movements, nor by any corporeal quality; although in it there is something which greatly

resembles corporeal substances. Be contented, for the present, with what I have just told you; for it is all that my occupations, and the haste with which I am obliged to write this letter, will allow me.

I will merely give you, in a few words, a relation which will afford you abundant matter for meditation. You know our beloved brother Gennadius, the physician, who is known of every body, and who, having practised at Rome with great reputation, is now living at Carthage. You further know that he is a man of much religion, very humane and charitable towards the poor, and never slow to assist them. Nevertheless, though he has always been careful to give alms, in his youth he was doubtful, as he has since told us, of the existence of a future life. But as it was not to be that a man so good and so earnest in works of charity, should be abandoned of God, he, one night, in a dream, saw a young man of an agreeable countenance, who said unto him, "Follow me." Gennadius rose to follow him, and arrived in a city, which he had no sooner entered, than he heard, on his right hand, music so soft and harmonious, that it surpassed any thing he had ever heard; and as he was at a loss to conceive what it could be, the young man who conducted him told him that it was the hymns of the Saints, and of the Blessed. He also saw something at his left, but I have forgotten what it was. Afterwards he awoke, the dream faded away, and he looked upon it as a dream only.

But on the following night this same young man appeared again to him, and asked him if he recognised him. Gennadius having assured him that he recollected him perfectly well, the young man asked him where he had seen him; to which Gennadius, who had his memory full of the hymns of the saints that he had heard in the place whither this young man had conducted him, did not find it difficult to reply. "But what you remarked there," said the young

man, "was it in a dream, or awake that you saw it?" "In a dream," replied Gennadius. "True," replied the young man, "it was in a dream that you saw it, and it is only in a dream that you see what is now taking place." "I believe it," replied Gennadius. "And where, at this moment, is your body?" returned his young instructor. "In my bed," replied Gennadius. "And do you not know," continued the young man, "that your corporeal eyes are at present shut, and without perception, and that you cannot see with them?" "I know it," replied Gennadius. "How is it, then, that you see me?" returned the other. And as Gennadius hesitated, not well knowing what to answer, the young man drew him to a conclusion, by saying, "In like manner that at this moment, though you are in your bed, and asleep, and your corporeal eyes are shut and powerless, you yet have other eyes, with which you see me, and which serve you, whilst those of your body are useless: even so when you are dead, although your corporeal eyes will have no perception, you will be capable of seeing and feeling. Take care, therefore, after what has now passed, how you again entertain doubts of a life after death for all men." It was thus that this man, so truly Christian, was, as he says, relieved from his doubts on this subject; and is it not clear that it is God who has thus relieved him, by this most singular act of his mercy and providence?

*Letter to Evodius.*

THE END.











